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NATIVE STOCK

BY  
ARTHUR POUND

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JOHNSON OF THE MOHAWKS  
NATIVE STOCK: The Rise of  
the American Spirit Seen in  
Six Lives



# NATIVE STOCK

*THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT  
SEEN IN SIX LIVES*

BY  
ARTHUR POUND

NEW YORK  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1931

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## PREFACE

*Johnson of the Mohawks* was so well received by an indulgent press and public that the author felt encouraged to present this series of short biographies of half-forgotten Americans. Varied as the personalities of the subjects are, I think that the reader may detect in their several lives, and throughout the century and a half which their multiple lives cover, a crescendo American spirit. All save one died definitely more American in feeling than he was at the outset of his career; the span between young Pepperrell and old Watson covers a transition period in which the dominant trends in America became fixed.

When Pepperrell was born, the white man's America ended within fifty miles of tidewater; when Elkanah Watson died the westward surge was well under way and within ten years more American settlers reached the Pacific. In the same period the thirteen colonies marched from subjection and disunion into a sovereign union so powerful that fear of external aggression vanished. Diplomatically, the Republic had already come of age with the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine; economically, with the opening of the Erie Canal; politically, with the reduction of the



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Electoral College to absurdity, and the elimination of the Congressional caucus as a nominating body. Religiously, the country broadened until Calvinist New England produced Unitarianism, and such extremes in point of age and ritualism as Catholicism and Methodism found converts and safety everywhere.

In general, the United States may be considered made when Elkanah Watson died. The conqueror race, though as yet blissfully unaware that it would ever be troubled by social problems for its own sake, already had one on its conscience—the servitude of the blacks. We can see the rise of that problem in three overlapping lives: Pepperrell bought a few slaves as lightly as he bought fish and lumber, without a thought of the ethics of the transaction; James Clinton inherited some slaves and freed them; Watson would not own a slave and fretted his soul because other whites kept blacks in bondage.

Although no effort has been made to present these six lives as stages of national development, the attentive reader will discover for himself herein some of the details of a wide and deep evolution of thought and feeling. The trend would be clearer, of course, if men more analytic and talkative had been selected. Watson was vocal enough, to be sure, but the others were first of all doers of the deed rather than soothsayers. Two were so completely men of action that they seem to have had no ideals worth discussing, though one con-

sistently did his full duty and the other proved a scapegrace. Two others demonstrated their idealism definitely, while the remaining two fall into that vast army of effectives who take it for granted that their labors, whether of peace or war, trade or administration, if well done in the eyes of their kind, eventually will enrich and dignify the lives of those as yet unborn. There is a good deal of that subconscious idealism among striving Americans to this day.

I am deeply grateful to many persons and institutions for assistance in preparing this work; to Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox and Mr. Allan Nevins of Columbia University, to Dr. J. I. Wyer and Mr. George G. Champlin of the New York State Library, to Dr. Alexander C. Flick, State Historian of New York, to Mr. Peter Nelson, Assistant State Historian, to Dr. Richard E. Day, former editor of historical manuscripts for the State of New York, to Mr. Mark S. Watson of the *Baltimore Sun*, to the Reverend Ellwood Corning of Newburgh, and to Mr. Randolph G. Adams of the William L. Clements Library of American History, who has been especially generous in supplying material from the vast store of unpublished manuscripts in his care.

ARTHUR POUND

New Scotland, New York.



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## THE WILLIAM PEPPERRELLS



## THE WILLIAM PEPPERRELLS

PRECISELY when the Vikings came to America is a question that disturbs some excellent persons, and the controversy continues with racial and religious overtones. Yet whether they arrived before Columbus is immaterial, since the Vikings kept on coming afterward from those shores of Britain where, as Norsemen, Danes, Saxons or Normans, they had planted themselves for a civilizing interlude. Viking strains appear in many Americans' careers, but in none more strikingly than in the William Pepperrells, father and son.

The place name in the family tradition is Plymouth. Parsons, in his *Life of Sir William Pepperrell, Bart.*, stresses the Welsh origin of the Pepperrells, citing the founder's use of Welsh dialect. The words he cites look, however, rather more like broad Devon than Anglicized Welsh. None of the place names which Parsons mentioned can be found on a Welsh map or in a British gazetteer, a harsh fact which has impelled later writers to favor Tavistock, a Devonshire village on the edge of Dartmoor forest, about fifteen miles north of Plymouth. Nevertheless the Welsh myth holds, as if Welshmen could come out of Devon. I dare say there was no more Welsh blood in the Pepper-

rells than one talkative Welshman or Welshwoman might bring into a line of silent, steady Wessex folk. It is significant that Danes settled part of Tavistock in the tenth century, and my guess is that they contributed far more than the Welsh strain to the life-stream of the American Pepperrells. In appearance the Pepperrells were typical Devonshire men, big, broad, long-headed men, and heavy-thewed—watermen rather than land-men.

There is a sea tang and salt air in the background of the first American Pepperrell. Like his Viking forbears, the senior member of the firm found a new home on a rocky shore after long roving, and proceeded straightway to make it his, building his fortune from the friendly but unstable sea. At all points, too, he seems to have understood his Puritan neighbors, as a Devonshire man might well have done, but as a Welshman might have found difficult. The early Pepperrell letters are badly misspelled, a fact which may account for the errors in British place names.

There is the usual story, so frequently met with in dim family origins, of the founder's running away to sea to escape the parental birching after a truant holiday; but sea and shore were his destined habitat, and he would have found his way to them regardless of such an incident. At any rate he was properly bound out, after the fashion of his time, to a sea captain making the customary fishing drives from West Eng-

land ports upon the Newfoundland Banks. On one of these journeys Pepperrell's eye fell on the Isles, more generally called the Isle of Shoals, that little archipelago lying nine miles off Kittery Point, at the extreme southern end of the Maine littoral. Smith's Isles they were once called, because Captain John Smith visited and mapped them. Their six hundred acres of land and small havens early recommended them to fishermen, as did also the presence in their waters of the dunfish, described in the early books as a larger and better cod, though perhaps only a cod more slowly dried. At any rate, Isle of Shoals, due either to better fish or better sun and air, became the center of a small, monopolized trade because dunfish brought higher prices in Europe than the standard cod of commerce.

William Pepperrell, having served his apprenticeship and saved some money from later voyages, settled on the Isles about 1676, with Thomas Gibbons of Tops-ham, England, as a partner. He was then about twenty-five years old. Shrewd men, the partners capitalized their knowledge of fishing craft and fishermen by leaving to others the perils of the deep while they cured fish bought from the fishermen and shipped them to Europe. They hired their vessels and bought and built more for hire, the near-by woods offering noble oak for ships' timbers. So the partners prospered for several years, until Gibbons moved eastward to the Waldo patent to set up for himself. As our

William made his way, he did what he could for his poor relations in England; there was a benevolent streak in the man, which carried on to his famous son who spoke of himself once as the "father of his army."

At Kittery across the water lived an English shipwright, John Bray, a Plymouth man twenty-five years back, with a marriageable daughter named Margery. Our stalwart fisherman paid court to her, and after being put on a probation during which he proved himself, was finally accepted. He moved then from the islands to the mainland, building a house on part of Kittery Point given him by Bray. This house, enlarged by his son, is the historic Pepperrell mansion beholden by sightseers, though now somewhat reduced in proportions from what it was in its prime. William, senior, built the south part and William, junior, the north part, both families living under the one roof.

The Brays were God-fearing folk, and Pepperrell a prosperous man; accordingly the family grew at almost the approved pioneer pace, though not quite up to some in pace and numbers. Andrew, the first child, arrived in 1681. Then came five daughters, at intervals of two to four years, then William in 1696, then two more daughters. All eight children arrived at maturity and all married, a remarkable record in view of the death rates in those days and bespeaking both vitality and unco' good housekeeping. The elder Mrs. Pepperrell, all in all, proved her abilities no less than

her husband and sons in the larger scenes of business and war. The family genealogist speaks of her as exercising a mighty moral force over her children.

The father of this bouncing family laid broad and deep the foundations of a fortune described as without equal in America in his son's time. Broadly it was founded on shipbuilding and trade, with land purchases and lumbering adding unearned increment to the inventory. Ships could be built on that coast cheaper than in any other place in the world. Choice timber came down to tidewater in numerous sheltered inlets; Yankee ingenuity did the rest. Pepperrell built ships briskly and sold them profitably; between sales, his vessels carried lumber, fish, fish oil and live stock to the West Indies, bringing back sugar; others went laden to Europe, to return with dry goods, hardware, wine and salt, or to be sold at the English docks. A resourceful man, ready to sell a ship and cargo anywhere, any time. There were plenty more sticks in the woods. In its heyday the firm may have had as many as a hundred smacks on the Grand Banks, either hired to others or operated by the Pepperrells, but all of them bringing the catch into the Pepperrell saltery, and all of them outfitting from the Pepperrell store.

A hard life with complications now undreamed of, as appears in this letter of the elder Pepperrell to Captain John Hill, his agent at Saco, in 1696, shortly after the birth of son William. Usher Parsons prob-

ably edited the spelling, as he says elsewhere that the first American Pepperrell had extreme difficulty with the King's English when he put quill to paper:

With much trouble I have gotten men and sent for the sloop, and desire you to dispatch them with all speed, for, if all things be ready, they may be fitted to leave in two days as well as in seven years. If you and the carpenter think it convenient, and the ground has not too much descent, I think it may be better to bend her sails before you launch her, so as to leave immediately. But, I shall leave it to your management, and desire you to hasten them day and night; for, Sir, it will be dangerous tarrying there, on account of hostile savages in the vicinity, and it will be very expensive to keep the men upon pay. I send you a barrel of rum, and there is a cask of wine to launch with. So, with all services to yourself and lady, Hoping they are all in good health, as I am at present, who are your humble servant to command.

Edited or not, that is a precious letter, as reflecting the driving spirit of the man, the perils which dogged his ventures, and the hospitality marking the consigning of Pepperrell vessels to their work in the world. Both the Pepperrells were temperate men, yet they would have considered they were flouting Providence to send a vessel into the waters untouched by alcohol, and their neighbors would have judged them niggardly unless they provided rum for the men and wine for the ladies when their wooden ships came down the ways. Note, too, the premium put upon speed, the impatience with delay and the prompt advice to take

a short cut. "Bend her sails before you launch her." The American spirit in action in 1696, all hot haste and ready to take a chance!

The older Pepperrell children received little schooling beyond the three "R's"—reading, writing and arithmetic. The elder son, Andrew, became a clever merchant, in whose interest the father changed the title of his firm to "William Pepperrell & Son." He early went to sea in one of his father's ships, and for a time represented abroad not only his own firm but several other American shippers. He married in 1707, when he was twenty-eight, but lived only six years longer, leaving two children.

The girls probably learned more housewifery than literature, yet so far met the approval of the beaux of the period that each married once, two married twice and one married thrice. The multiple marriages reflect the perils of the seafaring life in at least one case; several of the daughters married their father's captains, one of whom was lost at sea. In general, the Pepperrell girls made good matches. Among old William's ten sons-in-law were two ministers, two merchants and two judges. These daughters presented their father and mother with thirty grandchildren; the eldest daughter, Mary, holding the family record with no less than sixteen children, by three husbands. Eleven of Mary's children reached maturity. It is pleasant to know that dutiful Mary, after these trials, lived to be eighty.

Through all these grandchildren with other names, the Pepperrell blood is no doubt widely filtered through America's veins, though the male line died out with the younger William in the second generation. The family records were not as well preserved as is usual in New England, because of the fact that Kittery sank into obscurity after the Revolution, when the leader of the clan went into exile as a loyalist and humble fishermen occupied the family mansion.

No hint of this melancholy future, however, could have come to the elder of the two William Pepperrells in his lifetime. When his businesslike eldest son died, he presently took his younger son, born fifteen years after the other, into business, changing the firm name to "The William Pepperrells," a neat touch with advertising value in it.

Young William, born after the family was well established, received a thorough education, though of most practical character. He wrote a beautiful practiced hand so early that at ten he helped to keep his father's accounts in some of the side issues which the old gentleman followed, William the Elder being colonel of militia and local justice. As a boy he clerked in the store, sold rope and salt pork to the fishermen, and weighed their catches at the wharf when they returned. Private tutors, probably the local clergymen, taught him mathematics to such purpose that he could survey land and navigate a ship. Geography he absorbed with-

out much formal study, as the father and son mapped the progress of their vessels. In the same easy way he picked up smatterings of the military art and Indian warfare, as part of the duty of every able-bodied man on the frontier.

Since the second William Pepperrell owes his lasting fame to warfare, rather than to trade or his all-round success in life, it is worth noting that he grew to manhood in the midst of alarms. During the first seventeen years of his life, with one interval, France and Great Britain were at war, and the Kittery neighborhood saw plenty of examples of the ferocity of border warfare. Things had been worse in his mother's time, when one of her dearest friends had been tomahawked and scalped, and twenty-one persons had been murdered at near-by Sandy Beach, now Rye. During his own boyhood Queen Anne's War raged from Portland to Kittery, sparing scarcely any settlement except the latter; in the vicinity enough murders and captures occurred to keep the militia on edge. The boy grew up in an atmosphere in which hardihood and alertness were the price of survival. Swimming, boating and hard work along shore gave him great physical strength; in his teens he carried a musket on patrol duty and learned to live off the country.

Even before he came of age, young William proved that he had not only a head for a column of figures but also for a big deal requiring imagination. He ar-

ranged for the purchase of a large tract along the eastern bank of Saco River, extending several miles inland, covered with choice timber and containing select power sites now used by cotton factories where, among other things, Lady Pepperrell sheets are made. Being a minor, his father's name is on the deed, but the latter soon transferred it to the son, who later used the water power in mill operations. An ample fortune flowed, according to Parsons, from this source alone. At twenty-one the son took over practically the entire outdoor management of the firm's enterprises. Thereafter he was often in Boston, where the firm had an office managed by Andrew Tyler, who married one of his sisters. Pepperrell soon grew to be known to the Bostonians as a coming man.

With his coming of age, the civic and military responsibilities, which his father had carried for long, shifted to the son's broad shoulders. He became a justice of the peace at twenty-one and captain of a local troop of horse. At the age of thirty, while his father was still alive and able to take pride in the respect paid to his son's competence, young William became colonel of the old militia regiment and commander of all the militia of Maine, then part of Massachusetts. The following year, 1727, Governor Belcher appointed him a member of the council of the province of Massachusetts. In this select upper house of the province he served for thirty-two successive years, down to the day of his

death, and for half that time was president of that body.

William, junior, gladdened his father's heart in still another way. He married, in 1723, Mary Hirst of Boston, a belle of such proud beauty that she utterly distracted that thundering divine, Samuel Moody, from his theological studies. Pepperrell won the girl, however, and no wonder, for he had on his side—in addition to wealth—good manners and handsome looks. To house the bride, he built the north side of the Kittery mansion, giving the house a size considered most impressive to the simple folk of the period, though long since dwarfed by the mansions of later generations. Mary Pepperrell, as Lady Pepperrell, kept state there long after her husband's death, but with less pomp than her wealth and title might have warranted.

The bride gladdened the family circle by bringing into the world promptly a daughter, Elizabeth, and two years later a son, Andrew. Two other children died in infancy, under the anxious eyes of their grandparents. Here was a great fortune built on personality, and growing every hour, yet only one son and one grandson in the male line to inherit and push the trade of the Pepperrell establishment. Considering the risks of frontier life, and the inadequacies of medical care in that period, the odds were all against a lone son surviving to maturity, and it could be written down

as likely that Mary Pepperrell would bear no more strong children if she bore any more. The rugged old grandfather, finding himself with but one Pepperrell grandson among a shoal of grandsons bearing other names, must have gone to his grave with some doubts for the survival of the Pepperrells. He had passed along to his daughters a superb vitality; he had reared two strong, able sons; everything he wanted had come to him except the definite assurance of Pepperrell posterity. Sometimes he must have wished that he had followed, in 1723, his intention of returning to his old home in England and ending his days there, where there were plenty of Pepperrells, but he had given that up under business pressure and ended his days in America as he had begun them, in the saddle of business responsibility.

The father died in 1734; his good wife, Margery, surviving him by another six years. Old William had lived on that coast, island and mainland, for upwards of fifty years, and he died with the sweetly solemn thought that he had improved each shining hour and compassed great riches for a worthy son. From a penniless cabin boy, old William had lifted himself to the position of a great landowner and shipowner, master of one of the largest fortunes in America and a trader of unblemished reputation in a hundred ports of call on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet the time might soon arrive when the Pepperrells would be, not a breed, but merely a name.

His will reflects the British respect for primogeniture. The great bulk of his large estate went to his son and partner, William. The girls each received £500, and a share of the household furniture. A number of other bequests show goodness of heart—£60 to buy plate for the village church communion service, £60 to the parish to buy corn for the poor, and £50 for the same poor in cash, £10 for the preacher, his freedom for a mulatto servant, and small gifts to his relatives abroad. These modest figures may mean that he made his will before his fortune reached its later proportions, or he might well have considered that its growth was as much his son's doing as his own, for William, junior, had been carrying the burden of the firm for the better part of twenty years before his father died. Presumably the son made more generous distributions to the minor legatees on his own account, as he proved to be an open-handed man. At any rate, the fortune remained intact, though envy made itself heard.

One William Williams, who had married the daughter of one of his elder sisters, became testy over the will and must have written sharply to his affluent uncle, who in turn gave the younger man this reply, in which reproof is mixed with worldly wisdom and sugar-coated with tact:

I think it must turn out to the credit of all persons to endeavor to support the credit of their relations. As to what you write about my coming to the council-board, I should have been glad had I been better qualified before

coming there. But I have this to satisfy me in coming short, that I have never made the least interest for it. But such hints would be worth minding if they were written by a man of more years than yourself.

This exchange of views brought no estrangement, Uncle William being a most forgiving man, and the critical nephew-by-marriage acted as Pepperrell's secretary in the Louisburg campaign ten years later.

By one of those political intrigues in which the men of Massachusetts reveled, William Pepperrell became Chief Justice of Massachusetts in 1730. Beyond good sense and some experience as local justice, he had no qualifications for the post, but once in office, he never let go and remained Chief Justice to the day of his death. At this time he bought a small law library from London, but it is likely he left the letter of law largely to his associates and based his rulings largely on good sense. I suspect his judicial office was a good deal of a sinecure, and that the needs of justice were not often allowed to interfere with the pursuit of commerce.

So many New England shipping fortunes were made in the slave trade that it is pleasant to record the fact that the Pepperrells managed to amass theirs with little or no attention to that unholy traffic. They owned a few slaves, but did not trade in blacks in quantity. Yet this may not have been from conscience, as no protest appears in a letter of 1719 reporting to a correspondent in Antigua that a shipment of five slaves had come to

grief, only one surviving the voyage, and she—"a negro woman marked Y on the left breast"—dying soon after. Maine was too far north for the slave trade to be lucrative.

In the long feud between Governor Belcher of Massachusetts and Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, Pepperrell supported Belcher, out of both loyalty and interest, the latter because Wentworth's trading concern came into direct competition with the Pepperrell firm. This trade rivalry reached the London courts, a Pepperrell vessel being libeled on a charge of violating the revenue laws. Altogether the Wentworths and Pepperrells were at each other's throats for nearly twenty years, until William Shirley succeeded Belcher as governor of Massachusetts, the latter going to the easier post of New Jersey. But the business suffered little from these complications while a William Pepperrell managed it.

Meantime the Colonel's two children were growing up. Elizabeth joined the church in 1741, at eighteen years of age, and a year later married Nathaniel Sparhawk, a merchant of Kittery. The lone Pepperrell son, Andrew, a lad of great promise, was admitted to the firm in 1744 at the age of eighteen, his proud father notifying the mercantile houses of the change. The Pepperrells were precocious men, coming to mature judgment early, but in this case there was an added incentive for William Pepperrell to fix promptly the

status of his son in the firm. Another war was in sight, and the father was cast for a major rôle in it.

In October, 1743, London had warned all colonial governors that war with France was near. Shirley relayed the warning to his commander in Maine, asking him to notify the settlements and dispose his militia for defense. In passing the word to his captains, Pepperrell added this sentence: "I hope he who gave us our breath will give us the courage and prudence to behave ourselves like true-born Englishmen."

Considering that he was an Englishman only by tradition, and that probably not one of his captains was any more a true-born Englishman than himself, this sentence nevertheless reflects a genuine attachment to the old country, a definite habit of mind soon to perish. As yet the concept of America was far distant, and provincial loyalties, while active enough in practice, had scarcely assumed the dignity of ideals. Perhaps this was almost the last time that the old phrase would be used in quite its old vigor and significance, as the pending war revealed to New Englanders their strength and the resulting peace showed how little England cared for their political or military interests.

France joined Spain, by declaration of war, on March 15, 1744, England's declaration coming two weeks later. Thus France caught England napping in America. Before definite word of the declaration reached Boston, the French moved out of their great

fortress of Louisburg to capture Canso Island, Nova Scotia. This attack succeeded, but a similar move against Annapolis failed. However, the eastern Indians all seemed won over to France, and Colonel Pepperrell discovered, at a council over which he presided in November, that the Maine Indians would not take up the hatchet against their brethren in Nova Scotia. New England grew panicky for its domestic safety, and the more long-sighted thought French victory would mean the effective union of Canada and Louisiana, by which the English colonies would be pinned to the seaboard with hostile, French-led Indians at their backs. Four years earlier, in 1740, Bienville had won from the Chickasaws the right to use the Mississippi, but as yet that route could hardly be used, and the one open door to the wide inland empire of New France was the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Later there might be two doors to New France. Consequently the idea grew that France must be conquered now, by closing the St. Lawrence gateway through capturing Louisburg and using sea power in the Gulf from that base.

William Vaughan of New Hampshire, a dashing person always leading in both thought and action, proposed this plan seriously to Shirley, also a man of driving zeal and hairbreadth schemes. The General Court referred the proposal to a committee, which vetoed it; actually the enterprise was sheer gamble, for the fortress, constructed under the plan of the noted

French engineer, Vauban, enjoyed the reputation of being impregnable. But Shirley pushed the proposal through by a majority of one on a snap vote, several known opponents being absent. Even before this, the doughty Governor had taken the preliminary steps to commit the British government and bring Commodore Peter Warren with his fleet from the West Indies into the North Atlantic early in the spring. The four New England colonies agreed to raise 4,000 men, and each provided at least one war vessel—Massachusetts several—to the largest naval enterprise yet set on foot in America. The army was to be composed of 3,250 men from Massachusetts, including Maine, 300 from Rhode Island and New Hampshire, and 500 from Connecticut. This gave Massachusetts the precedence in naming the commander, and after surveying all the possibilities, Shirley named William Pepperrell, giving him the august, but temporary and strictly colonial, rating of lieutenant general.

A blind choice, but a fortunate one. Thirty years had elapsed since the last war with France, and New England had no seasoned officers fit for service. While Pepperrell's military experience was small, his militia duties had been thoroughly done, he held high office in the province and was reckoned a wise, tactful man. The aura of success hung round him, and he had large interests at stake, as his enterprises on sea and shore would be the first to suffer if the French swept down

the coast. He doubted his abilities, consulted his friends and finally yielded to what must have seemed a highly dangerous position, likely to yield far more woe than honor. Once in, he did the handsome thing by contributing £5,000 to the military coffers.

Among his advisers was the celebrated divine, George Whitefield, who roused the crusading spirit by contributing a motto for a flag, "Nil Desperandum, Christo Duce." The clergy took up the cry, and recruiting swelled as they pictured the joys which the faithful could expect in Heaven by smiting the Papist French. Parson Moody, volunteering to go as chaplain, armed himself with a tomahawk to destroy church images, and Deacon John Gray of Biddeford wrote to Pepperrell:

O that I could be with you and dear parson Moody in that church, to destroy the images there sat up, and hear the true Gospel of our Lord and Saviour there preached!

God is dragooned into all wars sooner or later, but in this one the Deity was commandeered for action almost at the start. The remarkable achievements of those New England soldiers in the campaign can be explained only on the ground that they were fired to believe themselves the avenging arm of a just and angry God. No doubt many of them thought better of their wrath a few years later; Puritan fury never quite rose to the same heights again. . . . Pepperrell kept cool, but wrote that the news of enlistments thrilled him "like a cordial."

This was one colonial campaign that moved according to schedule. Within eight weeks the troops were raised and ready—4,300 aroused Saints—to sail in a fleet of a hundred sail. New York loaned ten cannon, and Pennsylvania and New Jersey provided some stores, but by and large the expedition was New England's show. After a day of fasting and prayer by the whole province of Massachusetts, their contingent sailed from Nantasket Roads on March 24, reaching the rendezvous off the Isle of Canso on April 1. The New Hampshire men were already there, and those from Connecticut came in a few days later. Warren's all-essential fleet from the West Indies appeared on April 22. Warren had declined to accept Shirley's orders, but received direct orders from London shortly afterward, and made a swift run to the rendezvous.

Even this early in the swift-moving campaign, Governor Shirley makes his bow in intrigue, a habit destined to grow until its effects poisoned the man's record and tainted his otherwise great services. Parsons finds evidence that Shirley wanted Commodore Warren to supplant Pepperrell in the chief command of both land and sea forces as soon as he arrived, which would have chilled the ardor of the colonials appreciably. That Warren refused to take the hint, and played the game with the Maine general as an equal, endeared him to American opinion ever after. He has been accused of paying more heed to capturing the

rich prizes which came along than to landing fighting men from the fleet. It is true that he made himself a fortune in prize money at Louisburg; but he also landed men when desired and took them back when they were not used, all without losing temper or interfering with the colonials, who felt entirely equal, in their divine conceit, to the job of reducing the fortress.

Amazingly enough the French were taken by surprise when the New Englanders moved on the fortress after one day's sail from Canso. As the ice went out the attacking force went in, and by a bit of effective trickery landed without loss, to the confusion and alarm of the enemy, who never succeeded in recovering the initiative. On the first day of the siege, May 1, the irrepressible Vaughan burned part of the defenders' stores, whereupon the garrison of the Grand Battery spiked their guns and fled from this vital part of Vauban's works. Next morning Vaughan walked in and took possession, sending word that he "awaited a reinforcement and a flag." But he was not the man to wait long. Hoisting a soldier's red coat in lieu of a flag, he and his thirteen men beat off an attack by a hundred men in four boats until aid arrived from Pepperrell.

This daring stroke gave hope of early success, but the French stiffened, and to a demand for surrender sent back word that their reply would be at the cannon's mouth. Ensued then a siege which for dogged

endurance has not been excelled in American annals. No horses available, the men put themselves into harness, sinking waist deep in miry swamps, as they tugged their cannon forward often under fire. Closer and closer their batteries approached the works. No detailed account of the siege can be given here, but a single paragraph from one of Pepperrell's reports to Governor Shirley indicates both the procedure and the prowess of the troops:

. . . Notwithstanding the incredible difficulty in transporting the artillery, etc., over bogs, morasses and rocky hills, we have, by indefatigable industry, got our train of twenty-two pounders mounted at a battery on the west of the town some days since. . . . But those cannon prove very bad. . . . We have also, two nights since, with the utmost difficulty, thrown up a fascine battery within two hundred and fifty yards of the west gate, and planted in it two forty-twos and two eighteens from the Royal battery, which have beat down the drawbridge with part of the west gate. . . . The want of gunners occasions us great difficulty. . . . We shall soon want the powder . . . undisciplined troops and sickness among them. . . .

Nevertheless, the Saints made progress. A stubborn Island battery, apparently the key to the situation, was put under heavy fire and partly silenced. The walls of the fortress had been breached in many places, scaling ladders were ready for the final assault and the men nerved to their work by stirring speeches, when, on June 15, Governor Duchambon asked for a parley.

The terms were generous enough in matters of military courtesy, the garrison marched out with colors flying and all that, but the determination to make Louisburg a British fortress forever showed in the insistence that even the French militiamen should take ship for France. By the capitulation, 4,130 men agreed not to bear arms against Great Britain or New England for a year, the number including 650 regular soldiers, 1,310 militiamen, 2,000 inhabitants of the town and the crew of the French warship *Vigilant*. Fourteen sail carried the losers to France. They had lost 300 men in defending the place, while the victors, in their hastily thrown-up intrenchments, lost only 130.

The records show a quarrel brewing between Pepperrell and Commodore Warren over the formalities of capitulation. Warren, the professional, wanted everything done in due procedure; Pepperrell, the amateur, wanted merely to get the job done. So he marched into the town before the documents were signed, and seems never to have been aware, to the day of his death, that he was not supposed to do so, as Warren accepted the situation like a wise man and a gentleman after the entry of the army. All agreed that God had been on the side of New England when they surveyed the fortress from the inside. The possibilities of defense had not been exhausted, and five or six months' provisions were on hand. While the 9,000 cannon balls and 600 bombs fired by Pepperrell's artillery wrought

great damage, still the place might have held out until the inevitable pestilence came to their relief.

Pestilence arrived presently on the wings of bad weather. Even while London was echoing the celebrations which had earlier swept New England, the New Englanders at Louisburg began to drop faster inside the French fortress than they had outside of it. Two other considerations combined to teach Pepperrell that the lot of a commander is more difficult after than before victory. The men wanted to get home for the harvest, and their morale dropped as they realized that the army would have no share of the prize money resulting from the sale of the ships and cargoes captured. A round million of hard dollars, or its equivalent, went to the fleet in accord with navy rules. Cape Breton Island was a poor country, with little for landsmen to plunder; and Sir William seems to have kept strict discipline, even to the point of protecting the images from Parson Moody's hatchet. Altogether, the aftermath of Louisburg pushed New England and Old England farther apart in sentiment.

New England soon grew sensitive over everything connected with her victory at Louisburg. Sober divines, back home in Massachusetts, raged at the thought that Commodore Warren presumed, for even a brief moment, to take, in a point of official procedure, the honors of victory. The Reverend Dr. Chauncy, under the false impression that Warren had insisted that

the keys of Louisburg be delivered to him, wrote to Pepperrell this letter, significant as reflecting the decline of royal prestige and authority in the popular mind:

It is highly resented by every New England man in Boston Mr. Warren should presume to assume the government at Louisburg. . . . If the high admiral of England had been there, he would not have had the least right to command anywhere but in his own ships. . . .

Governor Shirley brought to the sick and sore garrison at Louisburg news which reassured the muttering, almost mutinous, army. Up went the pay of the Massachusetts men by fifteen shillings. The governor reported that ample supplies of provisions were on their way from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and even distant Virginia. Relief recruiting was under way and going well. Moreover—though this may have cheered the soldiery less than cash and food—Governor Shirley said he had placed the army's deeds so well before the King that His Majesty had been pleased to grant a baronetcy to their general, henceforth Sir William Pepperrell, Bart. Commodore Warren became admiral, Knight of the Bath and millionaire. As for Shirley, he swallowed as best he could the bitter disappointment that his own part in the victorious undertaking had been overlooked in London. It was twice the lot of this energetic man to send no better soldiers than himself forth on expeditions which earned

for them the hereditary dignity his vain soul craved. Henceforth he would relieve his feelings by belittling Pepperrell's leadership in the field and Vaughan's precedence in proposing the expedition, arrogating to himself all glory for the Louisburg victory.

Among the royal honors which came to Sir William as the fruits of victory was appointment as colonel of a line regiment to bear his name. First and last, this regiment brought Sir William more sorrow than pride. Its first lieutenant colonel, Ryan, had to be court-martialed and cashiered at Louisburg. With this wrong start, the regiment just drifted along until it came to grief in the Seven Years War.

In June, 1746, after a wretched winter on bleak Cape Breton, Sir William and Admiral Warren went to Boston for a grand reception by both populace and officials. Pepperrell's response to the address of the Speaker of the House is a model of brevity, yet long enough to indicate that he was at one with the people in reserving all credit for victory to New England:

Mr. Speaker—I am heartily obliged to the honourable house for the respect they have shown me, and I shall be always ready to risk my life and fortune for the good of my dear native country.

This, I think, is a revealing utterance. Here stood a New Englander who had been signally honored by the Crown, advertising his affection for "his dear native country" and pointedly neglecting to mention, with



*Courtesy of the Essex Institute*

SIR WILLIAM PEPPERRELL, 1696-1759

From a painting by John Smibert.



any of the usual formal declarations of affection, either King, Crown, Great Britain or Old England. After this statement, which was roundly acclaimed, Sir William resumed his seat at the head of the council. His progress to Kittery by coach in July was one long celebration; escorts of troops took him from town to town, and the north shore settlements tried to outdo each other with fireworks and banquets. Sir William bore himself modestly. The truth is that he was no hero, but merely the commander of an extraordinarily courageous and lucky little army which had achieved the next to impossible, and in so doing had weighted the scales of empire.

Twenty years later Hartwell said, in the House of Commons:

The colonists took Louisburg from the French single-handed without any European assistance—as metttled an enterprise as any in our history—an everlasting memorial to the zeal, courage, and perseverance of the troops of New England.

Smollett called the conquest “the most important achievement of the war of 1744;” and *Universal History* records the opinion that, “the capture of Louisburg proved an equivalent for all the successes of the French upon the continent.” In some quarters Pepperrell was compared to Marlborough, whom he slightly resembled in appearance.

Pepperrell stayed at Kittery a year, busy with his

shipyards, mills and cargoes; and then returned to dismal Louisburg. There he called a court-martial to pass judgment on his lieutenant colonel, who was straightway cashiered for mishandling commissions. He returned to Boston with Admiral Charles Knowles, who put his press gangs to work in that proud capital, rousing a mob that bade fair to inaugurate the American Revolution then and there. So great was the popular indignation at the impressment of Massachusetts men to serve in the British navy, that the militia refused the call to arms, until a town meeting had been assembled, in which both King Knowles and King Mob were censured. The peaceful settlement of this dispute is ascribed to Pepperrell's tact.

Early in 1748, his son Andrew having arrived at his majority and proved his quality in business, Sir William retired from the Pepperrell firm, notifying his correspondents of the change. He had been in the commercial saddle more than thirty years; his real estate holdings were large and profitable; and in addition there were his public responsibilities—president of the council, commander of the Maine militia, and colonel of that confounded line regiment. The 51st consumed a vast amount of its colonel's time and money in getting recruits, and shipping them to Louisburg. He planned to go to England when he could leave the regiment to make its own way in the world.

Before embarking, Sir William hoped to see his only

son, Andrew, the young master of the Pepperrell firm, married and in position to supply the appalling lack of male heirs in the Pepperrell line. Andrew was graduated from Harvard in 1743, at the tender age of seventeen, after two years in residence. He stood second in his class, and his name is followed in the Register by the letters A.M., indicating the Master of Arts degree. Yet his age does not indicate precocity; his classmates were equally young. Three years later he stood betrothed to Miss Hannah Waldo, daughter of his father's old friend and comrade in arms, Colonel Samuel Waldo. Father Waldo was colonel of the eastern regiment of militia in Maine as Father Pepperrell was of the western regiment; they were both on the council, and both had fought at Louisburg, where Waldo ranked as brigadier general. The prospect of an alliance between the two houses pleased both parents, who stood ready to ease the path of true love with substantial settlements.

However, for reasons unknown, but which every gossip along the coast fancied she knew, the match never went beyond betrothal. The truth, no doubt, is that young Pepperrell was not the marrying sort; the nearer he approached matrimony, the more the prospect appalled him. In those days such crotchets received little or no sympathy. His father urged him with gifts and words to make good his promise, only to be put off with specious excuses. Trade was bad; this or that venture

had become a loss; the young man had no time for anything but business. Yet he had a well-established firm with "30,000 pounds, old tenor" in the inventory, had invested £10,000 in a house and his father had given him £38,000 and stood ready to give him lands returning immediate income. So Sir William lost patience with the son, while continuing his friendship for the Waldos under most delicate circumstances. The letters exchanged by these old comrades are models of tact and mutual consideration.

In the midst of this perplexity, Sir William wrote to Colonel Waldo:

As everything in this life is uncertain, if Providence should order it that you could not give Miss Hannah anything, I say if this should be the case (though I hope it never will) I should be freely willing my son should marry her, and I cannot think he will ever be happy in this life if he don't, nor can expect a blessing; but I hope he soon will, and not expose himself and friends to unfriendly remarks. If you knew the trouble it gives me to write, you would excuse me from enlarging.

In reply Colonel Waldo said that he appreciated Sir William's generosity, "beyond all dispute a handsome outset," and added:

Though I have no reason to suspect his honor in the pending affair, yet the delay, (the consequences of which is not to be foreseen) must be very disagreeable to us. Your own concern for the issue of it will excuse my anxiety for the future welfare as well as present peace

and honor of my daughter, toward which it is my duty to contribute my best endeavors.

Honor or no honor, young Andrew would not marry the girl, though he could find no fault with her. Weary of waiting, his father went to England, kissed the King's hand, accepted a service of plate from the city of London, and enjoyed the hospitality of the great and the applause of the commonality for four months. On his return he found Andrew no more connubially inclined than before. Probably under pressure, the driven, misunderstood young man did set a wedding day. Then, as the fatal date approached, he wrote to Miss Waldo, probably in a complete twitter, suggesting a postponement. This was too much for Hannah, who planned and executed, according to Parsons, a rather neat revenge. Instead of recalling her invitations, she told the assembled guests, among whom were Sir William and Lady Pepperrell, that "she would not marry one who had occasioned her so much mortification." No doubt that was the most embarrassing moment of Sir William Pepperrell's otherwise comfortable life.

Andrew Pepperrell might not be the marrying kind, but Miss Hannah unquestionably was. Within six weeks she married Thomas Fluker, secretary of the province, and in due time mothered a girl who had sense enough to marry Henry Knox, Washington's chief of artillery, who rescued from confiscation some of the Waldo property in Maine. As for Andrew he kept on at his

business for a few months longer, and then died in March, 1751, at the age of twenty-five. It appears that Andrew, for all his determined dodging of matrimony, did not dodge gay parties. Coming home from one at Portsmouth, he caught cold and died ten days later. Although he had been a disappointment to his father biologically, he had been a good son in all other respects. With him perished the hope of passing the baronetcy and the fortune along in the male line. This was a staggering blow, and the father never quite recovered from it. Hitherto Sir William had taken public and private business more seriously than religion; now he began to lean heavily on the church, to listen to the lengthy disquisitions of divines, to use theological phrases freely in his letters.

There comes down to us a picture of the Baronet at church in Saco in these closing years, after God had visited him in wrath:

He passed much time at the house of Rev. Mr. Morrill, and always attended meeting when here on Sunday. His dress was usually in the expensive style of those days, of scarlet cloth trimmed with gold lace, and a large powdered wig. When strangers were present at meeting, it was common to solicit a contribution, the avails of which were the perquisites of the minister. Pepperrell would sometimes . . . throw a guinea into the box. . . .

New Englanders, outraged at the return of Louisbourg to the French at the end of King George's War, lacked enthusiasm for the new war which was soon

seen to be brewing in the French quarter; but they gradually warmed under the pressure of events on the border and the usual pulpit propaganda. The Indians everywhere grew restive. As leader of the Massachusetts delegation, Pepperrell sat in council with the Penobscots in 1753, hearing their complaints over lost lands and distributing presents. Within a year, however, the scalps were being lifted on the upper Kennebec. Even before Washington had been defeated at Great Meadows, Sir William received from London advices which caused him to muster his regiment of Maine militia, and arrange to fill its gaps. On July 5 came orders for the Baronet to raise anew to war strength his old line regiment, the 51st Foot, which had lapsed into inactivity during peace. Shirley was ordered to do likewise for the 50th.

Pepperrell busied himself at once with recruiting, but London, in its blindness, saw fit to reserve part of the commissions to itself, a capital blunder since it slowed down recruiting under a system in which each officer hunted his own soldiery. The lieutenant colonel, James F. Mercer, who would lead the regiment into the field, proved himself a capable officer to the day of his death at Oswego the next autumn. But neither he nor Sir William could overcome the initial handicaps. Militia spirit ran high in the inland regions of America, and the conditions of service in a royal line regiment repelled independent farmers of the frontier. In the

ports of Massachusetts Bay Shirley's recruiters had the advantage. Consequently Sir William and his officers had to go far afield and take what they could get. On this dull, mean business Sir William went to New York and Philadelphia; the comfortable, retired merchant must often have sickened of his duty, especially when his commission as major general arrived with a tag on it, making him second to Shirley who came next to Braddock. This order of precedence left the command of the Niagara expedition to Shirley, who made a sorry mess of it, while Sir William took over the defense of the eastern frontier.

His mature opinion on the difficulty of applying British regulations to colonial warfare appears in a letter written at this time (August 5, 1755) to the Honorable Henry Fox, Secretary of State, in London:

. . . It has been extremely difficult to get men to enlist in the King's regiment for life. The inhabitants of these provinces are in general quite averse to it, whilst no people can be more ready to serve his Majesty on any expedition, provided they are commanded by officers of their own country, and can be discharged when the particular service they enlisted for is ended. . . . An army of these North Americans are, I conceive the only fit men to meet a body of French and Indians in the woods; at least, in order for success, the English forces must consist in some measure of our own New England officers and men, who are acquainted with their manner of fighting, and can deal with them in their own way; and I think that if General Braddock had had a regiment or two of our

people with him, under command of suitable officers, to clear the woods of the enemy, he would have marched safely with his regular troops to the Ohio.

Complaint over ill-treatment seldom came from this quiet, tactful man; but he made it clear to Fox that he felt aggrieved when the Massachusetts governor, temporarily commander-in-chief after Braddock's death, gave command of the 1756 expedition against Crown Point to General Winslow after promising it to Pepperrell. Winslow lagged and accomplished nothing; the Maine Baronet might have drawn some comfort from the fact that thus far no expedition in this second war had moved with the precision and dash of the expedition against Louisburg under his command. Keeping inactive the one New Englander who had proved his military ability in the field, while new men faltered and blundered, is not the least of the disservices rendered his cause by William Shirley.

Presently Shirley went home to explain his shortcomings, but this change merely extended Pepperrell's responsibility for home affairs. As president of the council, he ruled the province for almost a year, until Thomas Pownall arrived in succession to Shirley in August, 1757. Pownall continued the Baronet in supreme military command of the forces of the province, but the nearest Pepperrell came to action in that capacity was to start for the relief of Fort William Henry with 5,000 troops in 1757. At Springfield he learned

the fort had fallen, so did not proceed. His strength wasting under routine duties, he grew physically unfit for the campaign which marked the end of French power in America. Yet Pitt, who knew the worth of Pepperrell's services, sent him a commission as lieutenant general in the royal forces, dated February 20, 1759, the first honor of that rank ever bestowed on a native American, even as his baronetcy was the first to come to a native American.

More family trouble haunted Sir William in his last year, when his son-in-law, Nathaniel Sparhawk, who had inherited the trading business after the passing of Andrew Pepperrell, had to compound with his creditors. Sparhawk, who had married Elizabeth Pepperrell, was an amiable person who stood close to the Baronet, but the attempt to turn a son-in-law into a son often fails and the business sank under the load of war taxes and fears. Probably a Pepperrell could have made money out of the conditions which floored Sparhawk; in the preceding war Pepperrells had managed to do precisely that. Sir William, long out of active business, was of course still a rich landed proprietor, but his pride was hurt and his heart sick. Son dead; son-in-law a failure; limbs heavy and health gone; what was there left to live for? Governor Pownall, coming to visit Pepperrell at Kittery on May 4, 1759, found him dangerously ill. He died two months later on July 6, 1759, in his sixty-third year. His death is

usually ascribed to rheumatism, from which he had suffered more or less since the Louisburg campaign. Lady Pepperrell survived him by thirty years, to see the family fortune go down in ruin in the Revolution.

Sir William's will, made two days before he died, is an intricate document. Lacking a son, but possessed of a surviving wife, a daughter and several grandsons, he wearied himself arranging provision for each and made his grandson, William Pepperrell Sparhawk, residuary legatee. This lad, as provided, legally assumed the name of William Pepperrell, and, as he obligingly remained loyal to the King, His Britannic Majesty assented to the young man's stepping into the baronetcy in 1774. The elders of York county would have none of him, resolved against him, thrust him off to Boston in 1775, whence he sailed for England. Neither he nor his brother, Andrew, married, and the young Baronet proved indolent, so the great house of Pepperrell might not have lasted long even if it had gone American in 1775. He died in Portsmouth Square, London, at age 70, in December, 1816, having subsisted comfortably enough on a royal pension, the income from a small plantation in Surinam, and a few other remnants of his once large estate.

A good man in a mild, gentle way, the sort of man who murders a noted line by sitting quietly in a club window.

Thus did the William Pepperrells move, within a

century of good fortune and bad, from the hale, creative poverty of the first William in America to the indolent weakness of the court pensioner in London. The peak of the line, Sir William, graced his time and gave leadership to a great adventure, in which for the first time the American spirit spoke with tongue of fire, serving notice on Europe that here, in no short time, would be something for chancelleries to consider.

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JOHN BRADSTREET



## JOHN BRADSTREET

HE who reads the history of America, covering the generation preceding the Revolution, will not go far before he encounters John Bradstreet. John will be discovered in many tight places, ranging over so much territory, and alternately pleasing and distressing so many persons, that one's curiosity in the man is easily aroused. Yet I have found no dependable biographical sketch of him, which lack is the chief reason for this effort to bring together the piecemeal evidence of his prowess.

Though a colonial soldier and sharing the colonial dissatisfaction with slow processes of the British military system, Bradstreet spent his best years as part of that system. Few Americans of his day were professional military men; the majority of native military leaders were only incidentally soldiers, marching on campaigns in a red-hot spirit which was likely to cool before the end of the expedition, and returning home as promptly as possible, to take up the quieter phases of citizenship. Bradstreet, consequently, is an unusual colonial type.

He was either born in Nova Scotia, or brought there while young. One derivation is given as Horbling,

Hertfordshire, England, probably an error, a leaping conclusion that, because certain American Bradstreets originated there, he did likewise. Neither is it easy to fix the date of his birth; 1711 is perhaps the best answer. He appears first at Canso, Nova Scotia, the key point on a tense frontier. Just over the water, to the north, lies Cape Breton Island, then in French hands and strongly fortified at Louisburg, a post of massive strength and even more impressive reputation. Nova Scotia, a standing prize in the long quarrel between France and Britain on the eastern seaboard, shifted from one power to another three times between its discovery by the Cabots and the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Its population contained many French folk and Catholic Indians, leaning toward Quebec in sympathy and cultivated from that quarter by both governors and bishops. The English never felt quite safe there between 1713 and the renewal of strife in 1744, and Canso was one of the most exposed points on the entire peninsula.

The mixed population of the place had two marked effects on Bradstreet's life. It gave him a command of the French language and psychology which proved of value to him, and he took to himself a French wife, a daughter of the prominent De la Tour family. In her he found a true, self-sacrificing wife, but he came under suspicion on her account, his reputation assailed by men so single-hearted in their hatred of the French

that the slightest trend in the other direction roused resentment.

Bradstreet's wife is said to have had relatives who were officers in the Louisburg garrison, a fact which gave him entrée there of which he took advantage by setting up a trade between the two places. This was, of course, between wars; as an officer in Phillips' regiment, then a loose unit of independent companies and militia, he would be free to follow private business during peace. This regiment later was listed as the 40th Foot by royal warrant, 1751. Occasionally, too, Bradstreet acted as a messenger of government in the formalities of polite intercourse between the two slumbering enemies; thus we find him carrying to Du Quesnel, the French commander at Louisburg, the congratulations of Governor Cosby of New York. From these visits he came to know more of Louisburg, its strength and weakness, than any other man in the British service, a knowledge soon to be of supreme utility, and some of which he passed on to the Lords of Trade with canny promptness. That he was really a trader, and not a spy, however, is indicated by details supplied by McLennan in his *Louisburg from Its Foundation*. On one trip he sold his schooner, and laid out 2,000 crowns in the French port, chiefly for rum. His ventures in other directions extended his acquaintance with the back country, so that he could truly say, a little later, that he was thoroughly familiar with Nova Scotia.

When the break came between France and Great Britain, in 1744, the former declared war first. Her servants opened the American conflict with a quick drive on Canso from Louisburg, which gave Bradstreet his baptism of fire. The place was defended by only a hundred and twenty men of Herron's company of Phillips' regiment, sheltered by a weak blockhouse built of timber contributed by the fishermen "in so poor a condition that to its repair, and that of the huts in which the soldiers lived, their officers had frequently contributed from their private purses." Outnumbered and outgunned, the French scored an easy victory over them, but an empty one, because the raid roused New England to fear and fury.

Bradstreet appears next in Boston, as adjutant to Governor William Shirley. How he secured the position does not appear, but his knowledge of Louisburg and the surrounding country fitted neatly into Shirley's program for the campaign of 1745, in which that bold but contrary being contemplated nothing less than the capture of the imposing French fortress. In the mobilizing of the New England army, and the gathering of the transport fleet to carry it north, Bradstreet took hold with that mastery of detail in the marshaling of men and materials which was to make him, later, a most efficient quartermaster general of the British forces in North America. He knew trade, values, goods

and ships, as only an experienced trader can know them, and as military men usually do not. In addition, Bradstreet fairly flamed against delay; the habit of quick decision and imperious action rode him hard all his day, sometimes to his undoing; but in this case the result made history. The Louisburg expedition moved promptly, and owed its success to speed, the tempo which Bradstreet set in preparation being continued to the point of French surrender.

Throughout the entire campaign of '45, Bradstreet proved himself an indispensable man. The commander-in-chief, Pepperrell, depended upon him as upon a right hand, once he learned Bradstreet's mettle. This regard continued to the end of the chapter. Through Shirley's recommendation, Bradstreet joined Pepperrell's own regiment of Maine militia, as second colonel, or lieutenant colonel, the lieutenant general continuing on the rolls as honorary colonel. To this shift no doubt can be traced the enmity which rose against Bradstreet among his fellow officers. These adverse reports, however, made no headway with Pepperrell though some of the leading citizens in Massachusetts joined the hunt.

In camp this whispering campaign came to a sudden end more quickly than back home. At a council of war on May 11, attended by all the brigade and regimental commanders, Lieutenant General Pepperrell put the issue bluntly. Here is the minute, describing how Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Chandler of the 4th Massa-

chusetts regiment made amends for his unfriendly reflections on a brother officer:

The President acquainted the Council that he had been informed some persons in the army had entertained and spread a report of Colonel Bradstreet that they were apprehensive he was not hearty in the success of the expedition, &c, and as such surmizes would be of very bad consequences . . . therefore he convened them to know if they apprehended there was any good ground for such a report, and if there were not, that the persons should be found out, reprimanded severely, and ask Col. Bradstreet's pardon. Upon examination it appeared that Lt. Col. Chandler had been guilty of great imprudence in entertaining and reporting such surmized without the least reasonable foundation therefor; and it was the opinion of the Council that he ought to acknowledge his fault & ask Col. Bradstreet's pardon, which he did. And the Council took this opportunity to testify their approbation of Colonel Bradstreet's behaviour in the army, and that his zeal for the success of the expedition was undoubtedly manifest by his active and prudent behaviour on all occasions.

Governor Shirley took notice of the matter in his letter of May 22 to General Pepperrell:

Be pleas'd to let Col. Bradstreet know his brother (drowned at sea a little later) has got a company, who he is now recruiting for, and will soon raise for Newfoundland. I am very glad yt you was so good as to make favourable mention of him in your letter to confront the villainous surmizes concerning him which are infinitely cruel. . . . I wish you would be as strong and particular in your next to me in favour of him as you can with

justice. Brigadiers Waldo & Dwight . . . have both of 'em been very full in his vindication.

Stay-at-homes in Massachusetts were talking against Bradstreet. A later letter of the Reverend Dr. Chauncy to Pepperrell shows the rancor which pursued Bradstreet for some time to come. Discussing the false report that Pepperrell had permitted Commodore Warren to take the honors of victory at the surrender, Chauncy writes:

How far a certain colonel may have had a hand in making mischief we know not. But some of your very good friends are of the opinion that affairs would have been managed full as well if he had not been there.

Jealousy of Bradstreet's prowess from the very outset of the expedition seems to have been the root of this vicious tale-bearing. The man's resourcefulness proved itself at the very outset of the siege. After Vaughan occupied the Grand Battery, vacated by the enemy under a fatal error, Bradstreet led the relief which beat off an enemy effort to recover that vantage point. At once Bradstreet "began putting the guns in order, in which he was so successful that the next day, the 3rd of May, at noon, one gun had fired on the town, and a second was in service at seven the same evening. This, Colonel Waldo (actually brigadier general at this time), who had taken over the command, reports with satisfaction."

On May 3, Brigadier General Waldo sent a report

from the Grand Battery to Pepperrell, in which he pleads hot action there as a reason neither he nor Bradstreet should attend a council of war, adding: "My absence from hence can be much better dispensed with than Col. Broadstreet's." Later on that busy day, Waldo wrote to Pepperrell a dispatch indicating how seriously his elders took the young officer's suggestions:

Col. Broadstreet desires me to tell yr Honr that it will be of the utmost ill consequence to ye expedition to take the least step toward a parley with the enemy untill we have gott our whole artillery in the best order to play on them, and as near as possible to their stronghold, and not fire a bomb or lett the enemy known the places we intend for our severall batteries, but make our approaches by night & as silent as possible. . . . This is also my humble opinion.

It was Bradstreet, also, who placed the battery at the lighthouse, which so far reduced the Island battery of the French to silence that it was unnecessary, in the end, to storm the island as planned. On June 3, Pepperrell wrote to Shirley: "The zeal and activity of Colonel Bradstreet, are worthy of all praise."

In the often delicate liaison between the British fleet and the New England land forces, Bradstreet was the trusted and tactful emissary. He represented the General in the negotiations with Governor Duchambon throughout the surrender, and he led the detachment which, at four o'clock in the afternoon of June 17, 1745,

entered the town "to receive the warlike stores and keys."

After Sir William left Louisburg, Bradstreet commanded the land forces, though Admiral Warren had been created governor. There were weeks of dread, in which the garrison, reduced by sickness and short of stores, awaited attack by a French fleet known to be on the way. On July 20, 1746, Bradstreet wrote to Pepperrell:

We have been up in arms about the Brest's fleet's arrival here. Since then we learn there are five frigates up the St. Lawrence coast, at Gaspee, and some transports, with four thousand Canadian French and Indians, waiting the arrival of the Brest fleet.

This news stirred Massachusetts afresh. More than 6,000 inland militia marched into Boston, and 6,000 in Connecticut stood on marching orders. But the danger passed, as the French, beset by storms and sickness, failed to unite their strength, and returned to France. Two French admirals died on this expedition, one from suicide; pious New England interpreted the failure as the act of God.

Further evidence of Pepperrell's appreciation of his second colonel may be found in the Baronet's desire to install Bradstreet as lieutenant colonel of Pepperrell's line regiment, the 51st, created as part of the honors bestowed upon the victorious commander by the Crown.

Pepperrell made it perfectly clear that Bradstreet deserved the post on his record and capacity. Both Pepperrell and Commodore Warren recommended Bradstreet strongly, but the lieutenant colonelcy already had been disposed of by the London cabinetiers, who gave it to one Ryan, unknown to Pepperrell and so far unfit to round a new regiment into shape that he had to be cashiered a year later. Failure to get that post must have been a heavy blow to Bradstreet, who was a poor man and as such handicapped in securing a royal commission through the usual method of purchase. The whole course of the Seven Years War might have been changed if Bradstreet had received the post he coveted and deserved in 1746. If he had done so, in all probability he would have been in command of that regiment at Oswego, a locale in which he was always lucky, when Montcalm swooped down upon the Ontario post in 1756 to score an easy victory. Certain it is that the great French general would have met stern resistance if Bradstreet had been his foe there. Always resourceful, Bradstreet would have done something unusual and astonishing, to offset the disadvantage of numbers; and he might have emerged from the fray with a reputation which would have insured him years of hot action instead of years of adjutant and commissary duty. By temperament a field commander, it was Bradstreet's lot to wrestle for years with the business side of army routine, a twist determined by

some bureaucrat in London, all unaware of American needs or conditions. On such hinges of fortune both the lives of men and the destinies of history creak.

In March, 1747, Bradstreet tried to buy from Sir William the latter's commission as colonel of the 51st. Apparently at Pepperrell's suggestion he submitted a proposition which throws into bold relief the old British system of treating commissions as merchantable property:

Captain Aldridge tells me you desired I would write and make an offer of what I would give. In the first place it requires good interest at court and is attended with considerable expense, and to be kept quite a secret to get such a thing done, so that I would agree to pay you at the rate of ten years' purchase, and you to have all the perquisites of the regiment, during its standing, or your life, which will make two thousand pounds sterling, which money shall be deposited in any bank in England, to be delivered as soon as the commission is made out, and further, that I will be at the cost, etc. etc.

The rank of colonel is so much below what the King has been pleased to give you already, and as I apprehend you do not wish to stick by the army, to head a regiment in some other part of the world, that it will not be worth your while to keep this, when you can get more than an equivalent for it, and be freed from all the plague and trouble. For my own part I will be ingenuous to you. The rank is what I want, and as my friends will then have it more in their power to serve me, notwithstanding it is the youngest regiment. And I will further give you security for receiving all the perquisites, and will make as much as an honest man can for you.

I have nothing more to add than that all the inhabitants out of town, as well as in town, are taxed I may say enormously for house rent.

Bradstreet shows himself here as a keen man "on the make," devoted to the military life and determined to rise, willing to mortgage his future in a very substantial sum, to take all responsibility, to gamble on the length of Pepperrell's life, for the sake of achieving a rank to which he stood entitled by his field services and proved capacities. A bold man certainly, but also a man wronged by an outworn, unfair feudal system, whose plight suggests the difficulties of a colonial soldier getting his deserts under the British Crown. The deal failed to go through, probably because Bradstreet could not muster the required sum, as we find Sir William later willing to sell.

At the time of this offer Lieutenant Colonel Ryan, in the command which Bradstreet had sought and been recommended for, was giving a complete exhibition of incompetence. Bradstreet reported him "as great a novice in the service as one of the common soldiers. I will pronounce that while he commands a regiment, and suppose it complete and composed of the best men in His Majesty's service, that in two years it would dwindle to nothing." A maddening situation this, to see another, appointed through favoritism in London, throwing away an opportunity which Bradstreet, with a little luck, might turn into fame and fortune.

On another occasion Pepperrell sought again to help Bradstreet's advancement. When Commodore Charles Knowles, then governor of Louisburg, sent Major Mercer of the 51st to Europe, Pepperrell thought Mercer might seek another berth while in London, in which case he determined to push Bradstreet for the majority, but Mercer returned and moved up to the lieutenant colonelcy when Ryan was cashiered. No fault could be found with Mercer, but Pepperrell would have preferred to trust his regiment to Bradstreet "who he regarded (says Parsons) as a protégé of rare promise, destined to arrive at great distinction as a military chieftain, which eventually proved true."

On December 22, 1748, when there was doubt whether the 51st would be disbanded or kept on to garrison Nova Scotia, Sir William wrote Bradstreet, who had given up his plan to buy the colonelcy, that he would not think of selling "if you were to be with me in such a post as I wish you" and on active duty. By March orders came to disband the regiment, but Pepperrell had the satisfaction of seeing Bradstreet settled into the lieutenant governorship of Newfoundland. In his declining years the Baronet rejoiced that Bradstreet's talents at last received further recognition.

Bradstreet's activities during the seven peaceful years, 1748 to '55, are not recorded in American annals. He was on the royal payroll but with too little to do to satisfy one of his driving ambition. Probably

he reëntered trade, moving cargoes in small vessels in and out of Boston, Canso and St. John's, Newfoundland. A dull life for a fighting man, and he lost no time getting into service when the new war cloud appeared on the horizon.

Governor Shirley, second in command in the spring of 1755, and soon to be first, put Bradstreet to work preparing his expedition to Niagara, one of the three moves by means of which the Duke of Cumberland planned to break French power in America in a single season. Braddock, the commander-in-chief, led the first one toward Fort Duquesne and disaster; William Johnson led the second toward Crown Point and a halfway success, Shirley took the third only as far as Oswego.

Weaknesses appear in this ambitious, English-born, triple offensive. Braddock's way led through a mountainous wilderness toward an objective of no supreme military value. Fort Duquesne, isolated except for communications to the north, must fall as soon as communications with Canada were cut, as they would be cut by the capture of Fort Niagara. Moreover, the way to Niagara led through the country of the Iroquois, staunch allies of the British. By that route there were no mountains to cross, and water transport could be used most of the distance. Combining Braddock's and Shirley's forces, the British might have descended upon Niagara in overwhelming numbers, earning a decision there in 1756 instead of three years later. A

shrewd consideration of all the factors would have decreed that Johnson be assigned to the western command and Shirley to the northern one, as Johnson had the strongest hold on the Iroquois, while the troops assigned to Crown Point were chiefly New England regiments, four of them from Shirley's own colony. However, the very faults in the British plan gave John Bradstreet his later opportunities.

For the Oswego campaign, Shirley selected, as the backbone of the expedition, his own line regiment and that of Sir William Pepperrell, the 50th and 51st, disbanded in 1748. A skeleton of half-pay officers had been retained, but rank and file must be hastily recruited anew. The 51st still carried Bradstreet as a captain, and he entered the war with that humble rating. At any rate, his captaincy was a royal commission, equal to a major's in the militia. Shirley's appointment of Bradstreet as adjutant general was a tribute to the latter's powers of organization, and forecast advances in rank which were soon forthcoming.

Inevitably the defeat of Braddock on the Monongahela slowed Shirley's movements, since he found himself overtaken by the responsibilities of chief command. A wiser man, with three sectors involved, would have delegated the Niagara command to a subordinate, while he himself remained in Albany to direct affairs under a unified control. Instead he went on, though too tardily, toward his objective. Meantime Bradstreet, be-

forehand in all his preparations and counsels, was in the Mohawk Valley arranging transport. As early as May 29, he wrote Shirley that delay would imperil the whole expedition. Pushing on to Oswego with two companies of infantry and three hundred carpenters, Bradstreet, now a colonel, rushed boat-building with all haste, and the agreed number of boats were ready when Shirley arrived on August 2. Shirley, perhaps dismayed by Braddock's defeat, decided he must move a larger force than had been contemplated. Before more boats could be built, the autumn gales set in on Lake Ontario, and Shirley sat trapped. Again Bradstreet saw opportunity slip from him; the indecision of his commander had robbed him of the chance to shine in victory. Leaving Oswego garrisoned by the 50th and 51st, and part of Schuyler's New Jersey Blues, Shirley retired from that strategic post, his reputation as a military leader damaged beyond repair.

For the next year Oswego was a weighty word in councils on both sides of the water. It stood out as the sole port possessed by Great Britain on the inland waters whose communications gave France control of the interior of the continent. Nowhere else, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of St. Lawrence along that whole web of waterways, could the mistress of the seas launch a ship in deep water. Fortified in 1727 as a counterweight against the French post at Niagara, Oswego constituted a threat against the French com-

munications so acute that in both French wars, the thought of New France snapped instantly to that objective, precisely as the thought of New England snapped to the objective of Louisburg. In King George's War, William Johnson began his climb to official honors by saving Oswego. In 1755, Baron Dieskau started to march on Oswego, but turned aside to defend Crown Point. In planning his campaign for the next year, Shirley decided merely to hold Oswego by reënforcing the troops he had led thither, while the great offensive should be made against Crown Point.

Before either of these intentions had been realized, Shirley turned the military command over to Major General James Abercromby, a grum Scot with no comprehension of either American geography or American character. The Crown Point expedition, under Winslow of Massachusetts, came to naught, and, though Shirley pleaded for the strengthening of Oswego, he could not induce Abercromby to act on his own responsibility. When the new commander-in-chief, the Earl of Loudoun, arrived in Albany on July 29, Montcalm already was on his way to the capture of Oswego.

In the meantime Bradstreet had been in the Iroquois country preparing communications and transport. In March he had begun to mobilize an expert force of three hundred boatmen, some of whom he had brought from the Atlantic coast. He pushed the building of boats and drilled his boatmen in infantry tactics by

squads and companies. Even though the enemy parties were already active in the neighborhood, with these boatmen and a few soldiers, he pushed into Oswego guns, munitions and supplies for the garrison which had reached the point of acute want.

This expedition brought to pass a notable duel of wits and valor between Bradstreet and De Villiers, the French commander in that difficult zone of operations. The details of that perilous expedition, as preserved in local histories, show Bradstreet a competent leader, superbly meeting all the hidden dangers of woods warfare. He landed his stores in Oswego on July 1, and started his return journey two days later, in order to have his boatmen ready for the promised troop movement. The rapidity of the forward movement had surprised De Villiers, but he was ready with an ambuscade early on the return journey. At Battle Island, near the present city of Fulton, New York, occurred a sharp action which demonstrated both the commander's resourcefulness and the courage of his boatmen, trained to lay aside their tools and fight as infantry on command. This account of the engagement appears in Churchill's *Landmarks of Oswego County*:

Colonel Bradstreet was destined to meet with perilous adventure on his way to Albany. De Villiers, with his motley followers, was aware of the English colonel's movements, hastened to the . . . river . . . and there lay in ambush awaiting the approach of the flotilla.

Bradstreet started on the 3d of July, his party in three divisions and instructed to keep as close to each other as possible. . . . Bradstreet was near the head of his command, and, when he had reached a point about two miles above the site of Minetto, the Indian warwhoop rang out on the eastern bank of the river, followed by a volley of musketry. Several of his men fell dead around him. He rose to the emergency; ordered the main body of his command to land on the western shore as quickly as possible; while he took six men and rowed to a small island a little above the point of attack and landed.

One of the six men who accompanied Bradstreet to Battle Island under fire was Captain Philip Schuyler, then a youthful cadet of the great Albany family, who led the Revolutionary movement in those parts, rose to be major general, endured misfortune with a fine stoicism and played a high part in the founding of the State of New York. To continue:

When de Villiers realized that his intended concealment until the main body of boats was on his front was now impossible, he ordered his Canadians to open fire on the distracted boatmen. No sooner had Bradstreet and his men landed on the island than he was attacked by a party of Indians, who had rushed through the water toward the island. They were beaten back three successive times by the heroic band, which had been increased by a few of the boatmen. Finally de Villiers placed himself at the head of about fifty Canadians, and they waded out to the support of his allies. De Villiers captured a few prisoners. The engagement continued about an hour. . . . De Villiers marched the main body of his command a mile farther up the river, where he hoped to cross and

fall upon Bradstreet's rear. This movement was promptly met by Bradstreet, who transferred his men from the island to the mainland and started with 250 followers to meet the Frenchman. Reaching the fording place, Bradstreet found that de Villiers and his party had already crossed and were posted in and around a pine swamp at the outlet of Lake Neahtawanta. . . . After fighting for a time behind trees, Bradstreet led his followers directly to the swamp, drove out the enemy, who fled to the river, where many were killed attempting to cross. The number (of the enemy) killed was somewhere from fifty to seventy-five, and about as many were taken prisoners.

De Villiers' report sent home to France is sheer gasconade, placing his losses at six killed and two wounded, and Bradstreet's dead at four hundred and fifty. In point of fact Bradstreet's total force was not more than a thousand, only part of which was engaged and the losses were slight. Other clashes followed, but Bradstreet brought his men and his precious bateaux through.

To Bradstreet's disgust, Abercromby had made no troops available for strengthening the Oswego garrison, and he was forced to disband his corps of boatmen. Oswego fell as easy prey to Montcalm.

1757 was a dull year on the northern front, but Bradstreet made his way. His old regiment having been taken off the army list after the surrender of Oswego, he was taken care of by transfer to the Royal Americans, the 60th. In December he became lieutenant colonel in the British army, but apparently unat-

tached and acting either as quartermaster or adjutant. After Ticonderoga, when Abercromby reeled back from defeat in a daze, it was Bradstreet who superintended the embarkation of the retreating forces, enforcing discipline upon disorganized troops at the bayonet's point and saving the army from a disastrous rout.

From the gloom of Ticonderoga, Bradstreet hastened on to the sudden glory of the campaign which was to make his fame, the almost bloodless victory which marked the beginning of the end of French power in America. Troops had been concentrating by small and quiet movements in the Mohawk Valley, in a secrecy so tense that the French seem to have been all unaware of the threat. After crushing Montcalm, the British command planned to break French communications with the West by a quick drive at Fort Frontenac, or Cadaracqui, near the present site of Kingston, Ontario. This post was a great supply depot for the chief inland centers of French power—Niagara, Duquesne and Detroit. Forbes was already moving on Duquesne; and, if Abercromby had defeated Montcalm at Ticonderoga, it is probable that the victors of Frontenac would have swept on to Niagara, reducing that post in 1758, instead of a year later. The unexpected defeat at Ticonderoga, however, limited the western drive to the single objective of Frontenac, but at the same time it increased its importance. Unless something could be done in that direction, the year would have to be written off as a

dismal failure in spite of the recapture of Louisburg by Amherst, which was soon to come.

An illuminating source record of the Frontenac campaign is the unpublished journal of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Clinton, sixty-eight-year-old veteran commander of the Second Ulster militia regiment, and father of two sons who figure brilliantly in Revolutionary history, Brigadier Generals James and George Clinton, the latter the first governor of New York. Colonel Clinton entered the Mohawk country in June, and with Brigadier General John Stanwix mobilized a force of which Bradstreet took command early in August. The column consisted of 2,600 men, pushed forward so rapidly that they were at Oswego on August 24. There 1,200 picked men, 400 of whom were Clinton's Yorkers, embarked on Lake Ontario. Taking Fort Frontenac by surprise, they captured the stronghold on the 27th and made almost a complete sweep of the French shipping. Little booty could be taken away compared to the vast amount captured; the torch was put to the rest, and it requires little imagination to see in the rising smoke of Frontenac the dissolution of French authority in America. The long-planned break had been made in French communications between the seaboard and the interior. As a result the French evacuated Fort Duquesne before Forbes arrived, since they could not hope to hold it indefinitely without supplies from Canada; and the next year Niagara fell an easy prey.

Bradstreet's success roused all America to applause, restoring prestige so rudely blasted by Montcalm's great achievement at Ticonderoga. It made Bradstreet the darling of the army for a time, bringing him promotion to a brigadier generalship. Particularly the dashing character of the drive appealed to the American spirit and the militia psychology, which dearly loved quick decisions and hated slogging, sustained campaigns and sieges. On the French side Bradstreet's victory changed the whole complexion of the war. Montcalm, with three victorious campaigns to his credit in as many years, who as yet had never lost a battle in America, turned pessimistic. "I am not discouraged," he wrote, "nor are my troops. We are resolved to find our graves under the ruins of the colony."

With the appointment of Jeffery Amherst as commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, Bradstreet recovered what he had lost in Pepperrell—a superior who was a great general, not merely in the command of troops, but also in judicial poise and ability to read men, use their varied talents to advantage and cultivate good relations between the arm and the populace. Bradstreet, always impetuous, ardent, full of fire and brimming with ideas, needed a chief, but a chief of that high order. He, himself, lacked, as shall presently appear, the elements of diplomacy and statecraft; a motive type, all hot sand and ginger, he was at his best pursuing a definite objective, fighting

his way through a tangle, whether of military accounts, deficiencies of supply or enemy evolutions. He made a most efficient quartermaster for Amherst, yet his zeal so outran his tact that he was frequently in hot water with contractors and citizens supplying goods. Both Johnson and Amherst often had to smooth over the irritations he caused in the two years which elapsed between his victory at Frontenac and the fall of New France in 1760. Nevertheless the armies rarely lacked the essentials while John Bradstreet was quartermaster general.

By this time he had been long settled in Albany, the army base, and had become a picturesque figure in the life of the old Dutch town. On his staff worked Philip Schuyler. Between the two men, as frequently between temperamental opposites, there grew deep confidence and affection. When London sought more information on the details of the colossal and intricate accounts submitted by Bradstreet, it was Schuyler who went to London to explain, which he did satisfactorily. During Schuyler's absence his wife began the erection of the Schuyler mansion at "The Pasture," a short distance from the city. This house, built on plans sent back by Schuyler after visiting some English residences of distinction, remains to-day in almost its original condition, a show place owned by the State of New York. There Alexander Hamilton and Betty Schuyler were married; there Burgoyne and his chief

officers were hospitably entertained after their defeat at Saratoga; there Washington, Lafayette, Charles Carroll of Carrollton and a host of other notables visited. Bradstreet, with his exceptional experience in purchases, his shrewd knowledge of values, and his all-round driving force, no doubt helped Mrs. Schuyler greatly in the building of the mansion.

From that circumstance arose the gossip—dignified by that bitter Tory historian, Judge Jones, beyond its due in his *History of New York during the Revolution*—which suggests, by slimy inferences, that Schuyler's absence was missed by neither his wife nor his commander. The truth is that the Schuylers were extremely devoted to one another. They reared a large family in what seems at this distance an almost heavenly spirit of accord all their days. In good fortune and ill they were ever one, setting the society of their times an example in both good manners and fortitude of soul. One need not believe General Bradstreet a saint to appreciate the consummate meanness of this attack on his conduct; but he, too, has a consistent record in matrimony which makes philandering at the age of fifty seem out of character in his case. Happily married, he fathered a large family; amid the suspicions roused against him in early life, he had shown himself a devoted husband. Enemies he made in plenty, because of his imperious ways and snap judgments, but on the family side his record appears straight as a

die. It is true that he left bequests to Mrs. Schuyler and two of her children. To Mrs. Schuyler he left his "carriages, horses and tackle," to a son, John Bradstreet Schuyler, a farm and to Margaret Schuyler, a daughter, the proceeds of a note. In addition he remitted to Colonel Schuyler a debt, but he placed upon his old friend and subordinate the duty of executing his will. At the time of his death he was living in New York, while most of the property bequeathed to the Schuylers was in Albany or near it. The value of the Schuyler bequests was probably little more than a decent fee for getting the business of the estate done by so careful and responsible a hand as Schuyler's. Most of Bradstreet's land and money went to his family.

Three Americans came out of the Seven Years War with mighty reputations, and one of them was Bradstreet. The public applauded his selection by Gage to lead to Detroit the expedition of 1764, which, in conjunction with that of Colonel Bouquet from Fort Duquesne, was to complete the reduction of mutinous tribes in the Ohio country and renew British control over the areas torn by Pontiac's War in the preceding year. It is unnecessary to record here the details of the unfortunate check put upon his career by his impatience and neglect of orders on this mission. Sent out by Gage under definite orders to bring the hostiles to their knees, he exceeded his instructions by entering into premature and unauthorized treaties which would

have frustrated British policy in the Ohio country except for Bouquet's persistence in pushing on to do what Bradstreet left undone. Lacking both the knowledge and the finesse to succeed in Indian diplomacy, he broke boldly into the field reserved by Johnson, and was there neatly outwitted by the Indians whom he had always held in contempt. His sovereign blunder, however, was the demand that the Indians acknowledge themselves subjects of King George, instead of His Majesty's allies, a stand which Gage and Johnson promptly repudiated. His treaties were likewise repudiated, and he was recalled, but not before he had committed the grave offense of chopping to bits a belt of Indian wampum in the council at Detroit. No man was less suited to the prolonged and dignified procedure of an Indian council than this wire-edged, impetuous soldier.

No doubt as a result of this failure, Bradstreet had to wait until 1772 for his major generalship. In the intervening years, he sought to improve his fortunes by acquiring Indian lands. Johnson, whose admiration of his old comrade had been lessened but not killed by Bradstreet's insubordination in the West, helped somewhat in these land transactions, but they brought him no great wealth. One of his deals occupies a good deal of space in the *Land Papers* of New York, Bradstreet and his associates disputing before the council with the owners of the Hardenbergh patent over

tracts between the branches of the Delaware and the Susquehanna, bought, it was claimed, from the Oquaga Indians. This controversy ran far beyond his death, claiming the attention of his heirs as late as 1786.

Bradstreet died in New York City, September 25, 1774, shortly after Sir William Johnson passed from the scene and not long before the colonies rose in revolt against Great Britain. To his death he held his sinecure as Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland, and with his other takings, left a decent, though not overlarge, estate. His widow and four children survived him, three daughters and a son, Samuel, who followed his father in the army, being listed as first lieutenant of the 40th Foot in 1755, and major in 1775. His will, short and sharp as Bradstreet's manners, left his lands and most of his cash and dues to his wife and two daughters, the third daughter getting £1,000 but no land or other share. The soldier son is not mentioned; no doubt it was understood when his father bought a commission for him that such was his settlement for life.

John Bradstreet deserves to be remembered as one of the first American soldiers to make a specialty of the art of war, and in that narrow field was a conspicuous success wherever the issue depended on thorough preparation and swift execution.

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EPHRAIM WILLIAMS



## EPHRAIM WILLIAMS

ROBERT WILLIAMS, cordwainer, born about 1607 in England, sailed for America in the *Rose* on April 15, 1637, settled at Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the same year, and died there in 1693.

His great-grandson, Ephraim Williams, born February 3, 1715, in Newton, Massachusetts, was killed in action by French and Indians under Baron Dieskau at Rocky Gulch, near Lake George, New York, on September 8, 1755, while leading a Massachusetts regiment as its colonel. By will he left funds for the establishment of a free school in western Massachusetts, the original foundation of Williams College at Williamstown.

Between the lines of these thumbnail sketches may be read something of the social history of colonial America. The humble leatherworker and shoemaker, a nobody in feudal England, adapted himself so well to stern frontier living that he survived to long life, steadily bettered his condition, and gave rise to a line distinguished for learning and leadership. His descendants pushed inland steadily, each son dying farther west than his father for four successive generations. In a century the seed of Robert advanced from the

poverty and obscurity of his beginnings to positions of relative affluence and responsible command. Yet in spite of their successes, a thirst for the riches of the soul lived on in them. Practical men and women though they were, nevertheless, the Williamses could never be content merely with riches or power. They lived, in part, to make a better world on earth, no less than to earn their way into heaven.

Consider the intermediaries between Robert, the shoemaker, and Ephraim, the founder of a college. Robert's son, Isaac (1638-1707), moved from Roxbury to Newton, became a captain of militia and representative at the General Court. His son, Ephraim (1691-1754), went on westward and upward to the rank of colonel and the position of leading citizen of Stockbridge. He died in Deerfield, the stronghold of the Williams clan. Then comes the subject of this sketch, military chief of his section of frontier, captain under thirty, colonel at forty, sure of far higher military rank if he had lived a few more years. No mighty scholar himself, he left a substantial declaration of faith in learning which has grown into an indestructible monument. In a sense, Williams College is a monument to a family no less than to a man, for certain of his relatives were more learned than he, and he drew his will in the light of their teaching and thought. Since that time the Williams family has marched across America, biting the new land with their plowshares.

Even so the Williamses were and are but one Puritan family out of the hundreds which have risen to fame, riches and fat volumes of genealogy. With inconsiderable variations, the description of the Williamses would fit many of them. It is the fashion of the day to gibe at Puritan conceits, discipline, theocracy. Nevertheless the Puritans dug themselves into America's social soil more deeply than any other body of migrants from Europe. Their breed, and to some extent their ideas, became dominant. They began the one secession movement which triumphed—the American Revolution; they blocked another secession movement in the Civil War. Their agitators undermined slavery; their manufacturers demanded the protective tariff. They led the early drives on natural resources with capital and science as twin handmaidens. Broadly speaking, industrial America has been reared on the Puritan base.

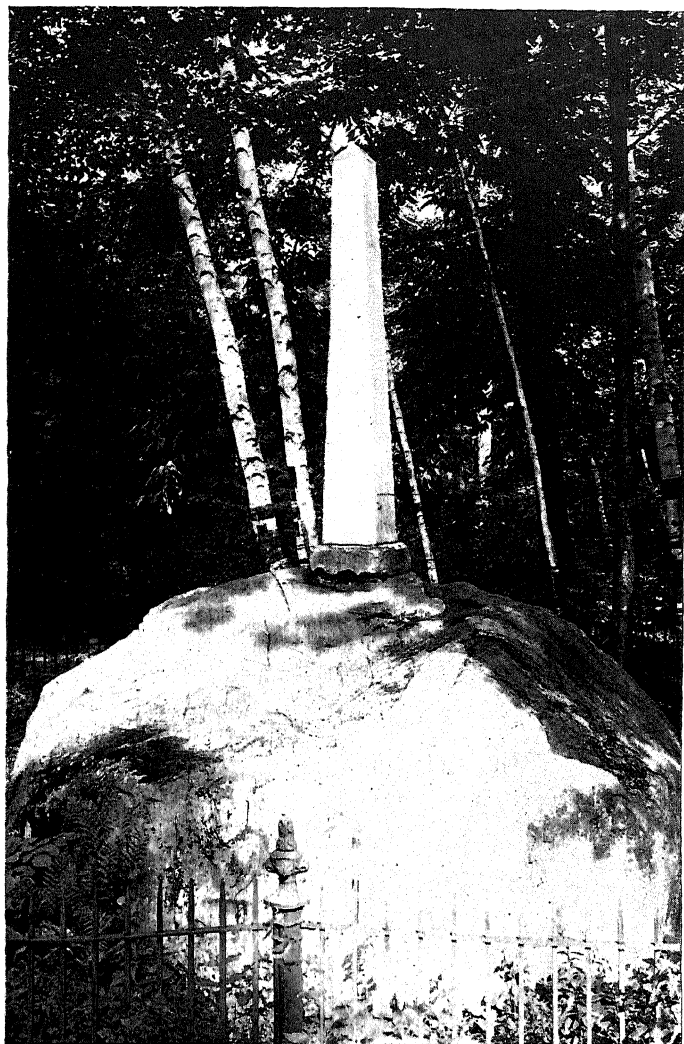
Back of the powerful "Puritan punch" lie ideals which maintain their vigor to this day—dignity of labor, unremitting industry, rigid cleaving to contracts, a clean and austere home life, democracy in leash to religious influences and social controls, zeal for education, a keen eye for wealth but also discrimination between wealth which dignifies mankind and that which enervates mankind. These ideals work straight for strength, cohesion, progress, expansion; a group which holds them can hardly be withstood.

Of course, there is another side to the picture. In-

dians, Baptists, Quakers, Merrymounters and "witches" discovered the Puritans to be unpleasant persons, harsh in judgment, prompt in punishment, dour foes, terrible in battle, crafty in council, yet with God ever on their side in mowing down the heathen and uprooting dissenters. Of all the peoples of this cruel world, they and no other did execute a woman of the Society of Friends. Friends encountered more hate in Boston than among the head-hunters. We may not approve of the Puritans altogether, yet it is clear they possessed two of the fundamentals for an enduring political system—social discipline and a lust for knowledge. They liked their sermons long and knotty; religion to them was less soothing to the soul than stirring to the mind. Intellectual curiosity might be held for a time within the frame of theological approval; but the barrier gave way gradually as learning advanced.

The Puritan love for learning is in startling contrast to the apathy of neighboring New York. When Eph Williams wrote his will, leaving his property for a college in western Massachusetts, Harvard college was already more than a century old. Yet New York had just chartered its first college, King's, in 1754, after a bitter controversy. Aristocratic New York relied on wealthy landowners for leadership; democratic New England felt the need of raising the sons of common men to leadership through training.

These men of Massachusetts, with their long heads



The Ephraim Williams Monument, on the road from Glens Falls to Lake George, New York. From the *Quarterly Journal* of the New York State Historical Association for April, 1928, Vol. 9, No. 2.



and bare churches, were rebels almost from the first. Within fifty years after the landing on Plymouth Rock, official London began to fret over their independent spirit. On May 26, 1671, John Evelyn reports in his *Diary* the fear of the Lords of Trade that Massachusetts might break "from all dependence on the nation." Sixty years later our Williamses of the third and fourth generation, on the western Massachusetts frontier, had quit thinking of themselves as Englishmen without yet reaching the point of thinking of themselves as Americans. The patriotic concept of America was still in the making among them, yet the patriotic concept of England had been lost forever. The whole Williams kin were, first and foremost, men of Massachusetts.

Eph Williams, with a stroke of his pen, lifted himself into the rôle of an historic figure, yet he flashed so briefly against such a deep background, that he seems, at this distance, less an individual than the representative of a family, a breed, a people—a home-spun knight doomed to die voicing the aspiration of a plain but powerful folk who would go marching on over his ashes. The broad outlines of his character reveal themselves in several other Williamses, for he lived in a welter of relatives rich in courage, public spirit and such lore as they could come by, who shared the perils of the frontier with a calm faith that its perils would yield to their fortitude.

The first Williams in Deerfield seems to have been

Zedekiah, who arrived in 1675; he was one of the teamsters killed with Lothrop in King Philip's War. Zebediah, his brother, captured by the St. Francis Indians in Deerfield Meadows, October, 1703, died in a Quebec hospital. From that desperate captivity returned three other captive Williamses, the Reverend John, who had come to Deerfield in 1686 at an annual pastoral salary of £60 paid in farm products, his son Stephen, and his daughter Eunice.

Following in his father's footsteps, Stephen became a clergyman and military chaplain, going forth on three campaigns, to Louisburg in 1745, to the Lake George country in 1755 and '56. His rousing sermons to the troops are noted in General Johnson's reports from Lake George; and there the Reverend Stephen Williams held service over a grave to which pilgrims still find their way—the grave of Cousin Eph.

Eunice became the grandmother of that extraordinary being, the Reverend Eleazar Williams, missionary to western Indians, who set up a claim to be the Dauphin of France. Eleazar was no doubt a little mad; his grandmother, after undergoing severe hardships in captivity as a child, seemed a little "touched" thereafter. She married a "praying Indian," remained in Canada, and on her visit to her kinfolk in Massachusetts appeared to them most uneasy in her mind.

In or out of holy orders, the Williamses were martial men. Ephraim's cousin, Elijah, was a major, judge, civil

engineer. Cousin William became a colonel, with service at distant Louisburg and also at Ticonderoga. Nephew Thomas, a captain with Arnold at Quebec in 1775, later died in service as a lieutenant colonel. Brother Thomas, a physician, was surgeon in his brother's regiment at Lake George; there he conducted the tests which convinced him that the enemy had been using poisoned bullets. Astonishing to think of all these masterful, warlike persons springing from the loins of an English shoemaker, whose descendants might still be shoemakers if he had not migrated to an environment favorable to courage and enterprise!

Ephraim Williams the elder, son of Isaac and grandson of Robert, the original immigrant, married Elizabeth Jackson of Newton in 1714. She gave him two sons, Ephraim and Thomas, and then died untimely, when her eldest son, Ephraim, was three years of age, his birthday being February 3, 1715. The father remarried and went on to raise another brood of able sons and daughters, leaving the education of his two eldest sons chiefly to their maternal grandparent, Abraham Jackson. In this way they escaped that stern parental discipline which every Puritan father thought it his duty to inflict upon his young. Ephraim, senior, probably was no harder on his children than his neighbors were on theirs, but he certainly was no easier; and after the habit of grandfathers the world over,

Mr. Jackson relaxed a bit with his grandsons. The time came when Ephraim, junior, perhaps because of the confidence acquired in his grandfather's household, found courage to tell his father that henceforth he would pull his own load without dictation. In at least one other respect the young man showed his independence; in an age and society when all respectable men were supposed to marry young, he remained a bachelor. In his early years he followed the sea, which made him difficult to catch. His journeys took him to England, France and Spain, and he went directly from seafaring to the frontier, where women were scarce. His travels are said to have given him polish and manners, to a degree frowned upon by his sire.

The family pulled up stakes in Newton in 1738 and moved to Stockbridge. No doubt they stopped in Deerfield on the way, and heard from the lips of their surviving kindred the horrid tales of the massacre of thirty years before. Ephraim may have learned navigation at sea; on the frontier he speedily turned surveyor. Even more zealously he took to military duties; in him the exposed frontier of western Massachusetts found a defender whose vigilance never relaxed.

Ephraim Williams, the elder, arrived at Stockbridge in time to join in the incorporation of the township, unique in that it was designed as a haven of refuge for the Wappinger or River Indians, a sect of the reduced Mohicans. To provide company for the missionaries

and their families, four non-clerical white families were admitted to the settlement, of which the Williamses were one. Their acceptance by the Reverend John Sargent and Timothy Woodbridge was in itself a mark of honor, as the supreme test was the likelihood of their setting a good example to the aborigines in the pattern of civilization. At the first town meeting the elder Williams was elected moderator, with a board of selectmen consisting of two Indians and three whites. No better place could have been found to learn the ways of the red man, as in ten years the white families in the township still numbered only twelve. Also, it was a society of selected whites, where Christian virtues raged and high thinking reached extreme elevation. Stockbridge mission, a model institution of its kind, did well by its Indians and the Williamses stood close to its leading spirits for some years. One of Eph's sisters married Dr. Sargent, head of the mission, and their daughter, Electa, became the grandmother of the great Mark Hopkins. No environment in colonial America would be as likely as this one to produce that rare combination—an Indian fighter who would leave his estate to education.

Jonathan Edwards, on his way to fame as a controversialist, worked for a time in Stockbridge mission while Eph lived there. Imperious Jonathan, deep in the composition of his thesis on the freedom of the will, seemed too impatient to teach Indians, and his extreme

self-assertiveness brought Edwards and Williams into conflict, or at least a clash of wills. Eph told Jonathan that he knew more history than politics. What Jonathan said is not of record but it must have been vigorous, because he never minced words. Williams would take these clashes coolly, and continue of the same opinion.

There being no other war on at the moment, this Williams-Edwards controversy swept all across New England, which must have relished seeing this deep and dour controversialist, Edwards, attacking single-handed the solid ranks of Williamses "whose wealth and talents," says one historian, "already gave them commanding influence in the western part of Massachusetts, which was increased by family alliances." Thus one of the clearest accounts of the fracas occurs in Parsons' *Life of Sir William Pepperrell*, where it finds space because the Baronet on his far Maine coast was sore put to it to avoid taking sides. Both the Williamses and Edwards would have liked Sir William to say a word for them in London, the headquarters of the mission's responsible backer, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; failing that, each side wanted to make sure the Baronet said nothing in favor of the other.

Three of the Williams chieftains were old friends and lieutenants of Pepperrell's. These were Colonel Israel Williams of Hatfield, Chaplain Stephen Wil-

liams, a founder of the Stockbridge mission, and Brigadier General Joseph Dwight, known far and wide as Brigadier Dwight. He commanded the artillery train at Louisburg, which included the Ancient and Honorable Artillery of Boston. There the "Ancient and Honorables" muddled their glorious uniforms and performed valorous deeds worth remembering when the descendants of those colonial artillerymen march in the colorful but safe processions of modern Boston. Later, in 1756, Dwight commanded the Massachusetts brigade on the northern New York front. Brigadier Dwight, who loved a fight for its own sake, took on the quarrel in his wife's name, as he had married the widow of Edwards' predecessor, Dr. Sargent. This lady was Eph's sister. Apparently the Williamses divided the influential citizens of Massachusetts among them for anti-Edwards propaganda purposes by correspondence; and the minor issue soon took on the proportions of a mighty verbal conflict which shook the Commonwealth. They failed to win Pepperrell, however, because Edwards had visited at Kittery when it was the house of mourning for an only son, and by his words of holy comfort had persuaded the grieving parents that God still loved them, despite the blow. Wherefore, the Pepperrells would not speak against Edwards at home or abroad. One man against a mighty clan, but the man was of such a flaming quality that wherever he touched a soul he had won an advocate.

In the end Edwards prevailed; Eph Williams' father retreated from Stockbridge to Deerfield in defeat, to die of sheer exasperation within a year, while Eph went pioneering in the Hoosick Valley.

Five years after Williams came to western Massachusetts, he ranked as captain in the Hampshire regiment, in command of the fort erected in 1744, at Hoosac, now Adams, one of the chain of small fortifications built to safeguard the frontier in the impending struggle with France. The regimental commander, Colonel John Stoddard of Northampton, marked the young captain's diligence and soon extended the latter's authority to all the western forts. Eph maintained his headquarters at the Adams post, called Fort Massachusetts. He kept an effective patrol by means of scouting parties which passed constantly from post to post, accompanied by trained dogs. Scout morale was maintained by high bounty on enemy scalps, Massachusetts rating enemy Indian hair at £30 a scalp, apparently the high figure on record. Killing an Indian was five times as profitable as killing a bear and much less bother, a scalp being easier to tote than a bear-skin. Williams' command numbered three hundred men, a force so well trained that for a year the enemy fought shy of his posts. In 1745 the foe approached but dodged action. A year later two of Williams' men were wounded near the fort but escaped inside the walls. In that year Williams raised a company for the

invasion of Canada, but the expedition never advanced much beyond Albany. Later that season Vaudreuil brought eight or nine hundred men down from Canada and reduced the place in Williams' absence. Soon rebuilt, the fort withstood another siege on August 2, 1748. On this occasion with one hundred men Williams fought off three hundred. Leading thirty of his militiamen in a sally he ran into an ambushade, narrowly escaping death. An impetuous commander, careless of his life and paying little heed to enemy tricks, he risked his life lightly time and again.

The end of King George's War found Eph Williams a trusted local leader in his own right. Leaving the family home at Stockbridge, he settled at Hatfield. He became active in surveying and procuring the settlement of townships on the upper Hoosic River "having persuaded the General Court to authorize and forward these enterprises." As a land lobbyist working for a group of wealthy men, he spent the winter of 1749-50 in Boston attending to this business, which he did so well that he received a grant of 190 acres on his promise to erect a saw mill and grist mill for the convenience of settlers. Always thrifty, he was now well on his way to competence in the new country. After buying two of the sixty-three lots in West Township, near his mills, he must have been gratified when the other purchasers voted to name the new settlement after him.

Governor Shirley gave special attention to the unusual situation which Williams' frequent changes of location created with regard to his commission. As late as 1753 he did a tour of duty at Fort Massachusetts as major in Worthington's regiment. Shirley in February, 1755, proposed to Williams that he join his old regiment as a captain lieutenant. Eph was willing, but there was a delay in getting the commission and Shirley cut the knot by making Williams colonel of the Hampshire regiment, Israel Williams resigning. This simplified matters considerably, as Williams' last residence, Hatfield, was in the heart of Hampshire.

The regimental strength for the Crown Point campaign was fixed at 400 men. Two other regiments of the same strength were also contributed by Massachusetts—the Worcester regiment under Timothy Ruggles and the Essex regiment under Moses Titcomb.

This description of Colonel Williams at this period is quoted by Holden:

He was a large, fleshy man of fine manners and customs, of a kindly heart and pleasing address, and as a matter of course enthusiastically beloved and looked up to by the men of his command.

The good man, as he rode away from the lovely Connecticut Valley in June of '55 at the head of his militia detachment, must have turned to look upon its intervals, coves and green-clad mountains with a moist and tender eye. He expected to return, and in style, after

a victorious campaign not without its gay social functions, for he took with him, as a bachelor should, his best apparel, in a trunk aboard the baggage wagon. Inventoried after his death, the trunk was found to contain:

- 2 pair of striped Linnen Trowsers
- 2 spotted (sprigged might be the better word) Woolen vests
- 1 wigg Box & comb & 1 wigg
- 1 French bearskin coat white Mettal Buttons
- 1 Broadcloth coat yellow Mettal Buttons
- 5 check'd shirts; 2 white Linnen do; 3 Diaper Napkins; 4 Pillow.
- Books: A new Roman History by Quest'n & Answers; Bland's Military Discipline; 4 Vols of Cato's Letters; 2 Vols of Ye Independent Whigg; 1 Ivory Mem'd Book with Silver Leaves; 1 Psalm Book; 1 Testament.
- 2 red Woosted Caps; Razors & Apparatus &c; 2 Linnen Caps; 2 pair Leather Stockings, 2 Do. Yarn; 4 Woosted Do; 1 Linnen Do; 1 Pair Indian Shoes Beaded; 3 plain Towels; 3 Silk Handkerchiefs; 1 pair Flannel Holsters.
- 1 Pair Leather Breeches Silver Buttons; "Black Knit; 1 Beaded Belt; 1 Sword Belt; 1 Silver Spoon & Tea Do; 1 Silk purse, mark'd; 1 M. P. pair shoe buckles silver pair Knee Do; 1 White Metal Shoe Do and Knee Do; 1 Japan'd Snuff Box.

Quite a well-found frontier officer, ready for the routs and belles of Albany, equipped to uphold the dignity and honor of Massachusetts in any company, even to the extent of a wig and a snuffbox. All this

sinful gear in a Puritan soldier's trunk! Well, times had changed since Robert Williams' day, and Eph had seen a little of the color of existence in foreign lands, but his ancestors would have forgiven him the gewgaws as long as he remembered to take Cato, the Psalm Book and the Testament.

Since Braddock had been roundly whipped on the Monongahela, a letter of Williams' dated July 22 says:

It is to be feared that General Braddock is cut to pieces, and a great part of his army. . . . The Lord have mercy upon poor New England.

New England, indeed, would be in for a scourging unless the Crown Point drive came to something, and that looked hopeless enough, with that lag in preparations and the troops muttering over short rations. Yet, in spite of its ill beginning, the Crown Point drive could not be postponed.

On that same gloomy day—July 22—Eph wrote the will that made his fame. Before leaving home he mentioned a will to several relatives who had reassured him of a safe return, but a slight illness and the bad news from the Ohio now brought him to the point of putting pen to paper in the contemplation of death. The document reads:

It is my will and pleasure, that all of the residue of my real estate, not otherwise disposed of, be sold by my executors, or the survivor of them, within five years after an established peace (which a good God soon grant!)

according to their discretion; and that the same be put out at interest on good security; and that the interest money yearly arising therefrom, and the interest arising from my just debts due to me, and not otherwise disposed of, be improved by said executors, and by such as they shall appoint trustees for the charity aforesaid after them, for the support and maintenance of a free school in the township west of Fort Massachusetts (commonly called West Township) forever; provided said township fall within the jurisdiction of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and continue under that jurisdiction; and provided also the Governor of said Province, with the Assembly of said Province, shall (when a suitable number of inhabitants are settled there) incorporate the same into a town by the name of Williamstown, and if the interest of such moneys be more than sufficient for such a purpose, that which remains be improved, as aforesaid, for the support of a like school in the East Township, in which said fort now stands; but in case the aforesaid provisions are not complied with, viz; if said West Township fall not within said Massachusetts Province, or do not continue within that jurisdiction, or if it shall be incorporated under any other name than that above mentioned, then my will is, that the interest of said moneys be applied to some other public beneficial and charitable purpose by my executors, as above directed, respecting other parts of my estate, according, to their direction and good judgment.

At length the Massachusetts men moved on to the Great Carrying Place. Williams' gloom had deepened, bringing a prophetic note into the letter which he wrote to the brother of a soldier who had lost his life:

I hereby mourn with you in the loss of your Brother. Pray God to sanctify it to all of us, & fit us for our own

turns, which will soon arrive—how soon God only knows. I beg your prayers for us all & me in particular.

Wig, snuffbox and silver buckles forgotten, the Colonel had reverted in peril to the mordant teachings of his youth, in which the ideal Puritan was pictured as walking with grim death at his heels through his brief, prayerful existence.

A week later, his pessimism still hung heavy on him. Believing that Johnson could not take Crown Point with the small and ill-trained army available, Colonel Williams wrote, "If we should be beat, our country is lost." His near view proved precisely correct. His far view was incorrect; the British would have won the war eventually, no matter if this entire army were lost, because they had superior resources. Even though Johnson whipped Dieskau, he lacked strength enough to go on to the capture of Crown Point. Johnson was seriously criticized for not taking the risk; it is well to have Williams' sober judgment on that point as he coolly calculated the chances. Both Johnson and Williams knew infinitely more about woods fighting than Shirley, the chief critic; in fact all the colonial officers, though some of them were jealous of Johnson, agreed in council that capturing Crown Point was beyond their strength even after Dieskau had been defeated. They would have tried, and perhaps have been hopelessly defeated, as Abercromby was later defeated in a similar situation and with greater resources.

To Johnson's demerit, too much has been made of the fact that, reaching the southern end of Lake George on August 28, his camp was still without adequate fortifications when Dieskau attacked on September 8. The explanation is simple; his objective was the French fortress at Crown Point; his new camp was merely a way-stop where the vital thing was building boats for the journey up the lake which he proceeded to do with all speed. Moreover, his army considerably outnumbered the enemy and it was hardly to be expected that the latter would divide his lesser forces to risk an engagement in the field. At this stage the New England commanders were hot for action; and they voted for a stockade as sufficient cover for the camp. This work proceeded under Colonel Williams' direction, but had not been completed when the unforeseen crisis arrived.

Dieskau, who had won a reputation for boldness in Europe, did the unexpected. Boating 1,800 men down Lake Champlain and marching them overland from South Bay, he planned to take Fort Edward by surprise attack; then, with Johnson's line of communication broken, he thought he would have the latter at his mercy. However, Dieskau's Indian guides missed Fort Edward by four miles, the fort received warning, and the French commander instantly reversed his plan, proceeding toward Lake George with all possible speed and in excellent order. Meantime Johnson received a

messenger from the fort. A daybreak council of war unanimously recommended that a relief column of 1,000 whites and 100 Indians be sent to the relief of Fort Edward. Of this column Colonel Williams took command, with Old Hendrik, the Mohawk, as chief scout.

The action which followed has come down to history as "the bloody morning scout," but it was far from being just that. Perry aptly describes it as a "reconnaissance in force"; Lieutenant Colonel Seth Pomeroy, on the ground, calls the force a "relief column." The council considered Fort Edward in peril, perhaps under attack, at the moment of departure; the problem was to rush enough support there to save the post and pin the enemy down to a decisive action before bringing the major part of the army up to complete a decisive defeat. The distances were small; Dieskau, far from his base, lacked reserves; manifestly he would be beaten by superior numbers unless Johnson committed the gross error of frittering his strength away on a wild-goose chase through the dense forest. The numbers placed under Williams' command for the reconnaissance have been reckoned too small for the task, but they were 1,200 fresh men, mostly whites and thoroughly rested, against 1,700, of whom 700 were Indians unlikely to stand their ground in a pitched battle, and the French force had been wearied by a forced march. As a matter of fact, the French, Canadians and Indians

were considerably less than 1,700 when the fight joined in Rocky Gulch, for Dieskau had left behind a force to keep Fort Edward under observation. In open combat, Williams' 1,200 might well have held their own against the foe; therefore their number could hardly be reckoned too small to hold the enemy until they were reënforced.

All the evidence indicates that the Americans were overconfident. The Lord of Hosts appeared to have delivered the enemy into their hands. Dieskau, abroad in the wilderness, seemed unlikely to get out of it. The colonials disliked long campaigns; militia all, they had to be thinking of their farms and fireside, animals and families, perhaps exposed to the rigors of border warfare at the very time the men were off on distant campaigns. The thought of besieging Crown Point through a long winter irked these dashing, ill-disciplined troops. Now that the enemy, in his Popish folly, had come this far, "let us smite the son of Belial."

The fever of that fateful morning seized even cautious old Hendrik, who had expressed his doubts in the war council: "if they are to fight they are too few; if they are to be killed, they are too many." As for Colonel Williams, always dashing and the bearer of a charmed life thus far in ten years of border warfare, he neglected even the elemental precautions at the start. James A. Holden says, "Skirmishers were at last

thrown out, who advanced cautiously, beating the dense woods on the right and left." The evidence points to the contrary. Colonel Seth Pomeroy's description of the relief party as it set out shows it as badly scrambled in the beginning:

Whiting in the middle, Cole brought up the rear, old Hendrik, king of the Six Nations, before, and Colonel Williams, the Indians, some afore, some in the middle, and some in the rear, and so intermixed through as they got ready to march.

Colonel Pomeroy's grammar and facts are also slightly intermixed. Whiting, not Cole, commanded the rear; Cole brought up the first relief from the camp and extricated the survivors of the column. Nevertheless, it is apparent from the testimony of this eyewitness of the daybreak start, that the column moved off helter-skelter, the Indian scouts intermingled with the militia and not fanning the woods right and left, as caution would have decreed. Since the ambush occurred before the column was out of hearing of the main force, it seems unlikely that the confusion could have been corrected and the scouts put out before contact was established with the enemy. Probably Williams intended to order that precaution later. Apparently Williams and Hendrik never gave a thought to the possibility that they might encounter Dieskau this side of Fort Edward.

This view gains color from the fact that Dieskau's ambuscade held no elements of novelty; it was old

alignment of troops in *double potence*, a favorite ruse of the French and their Indians, which both Williams and Hendrik must have encountered before or at least have heard discussed in detail. Perry describes this maneuver as

throwing forward both flanks at an angle from the base, thus making three sides of a rough parallelogram. . . . In this case the nature of the ground did not allow of right angles, but the whole position was curved like a sickle, the handle flank being on the west side of the road and about twice as long as the other, and the soldiers pretty equally concealed around the whole curve by rocks and trees and bushes.

Old Hendrik himself, on his horse in the road, seems to have had the first premonition of danger. "I smell Indians," he is said to have told Colonel Williams and, going on a little, he bespoke an Oswegatchie Iroquois on the French side in hiding. The column halted at Hendrik's first warning and Williams was trying to shake it into more definite order when the firing began.

The French regulars, in their white and gold uniforms, remained in the distance, holding the base, while the Indians and Canadians manned the wings. Effective scouting must have revealed this ambushade; yet the American van marched blindly into the jaws of the trap, and the whole column would have been caught there if the too-eager French Indians had not begun firing ahead of schedule.

Old Hendrik crashed from his horse at the first volley. With his usual dash, Colonel Williams mounted a rock, the better to rally his men. Thus he became the mark for more than one enemy musket, and fell with a bullet through his head. Whiting came up from the rear to take command, but the enemy held the advantage and the column retreated. The survivors steadied down when they came up to the rear guard, which had escaped ambush, and all hands made a stiff fight of it past Bloody Pond, until the first relief arrived under Cole. All morning, defense works before the camp had been rushed; over these the retreating column of spent men now poured. The French forces came on boldly to the attack again and again, but were beaten off each time and finally broke under a counter charge, leaving their famous leader dreadfully wounded and a captive. Even in the perils of the ambushade, Williams' men would not leave their colonel's body to the enemy's scalping knife, but carried it some little distance up a hill and gave it hasty burial "under a pine tree larger and taller than those then growing over most of the battlefield." Owing to the extreme emergencies and fatigues, no service could be held that day, but we may feel sure that Williams' sorrowing men and clerical cousin gave him burial by book, if not by bell, the next day. Lieutenant Colonel Pomeroy succeeded to the command of the regiment.

The grave is now suitably marked. It is said that

Dr. W. S. Williams, a grandson of the Colonel's surgeon brother, Thomas, exhumed the Colonel's skeleton in 1837, and carried away the skull to North Carolina; but this seems unlikely in view of the visit of a committee of Williams College alumni in 1834 who caused to be drawn over the grave a rock of considerable size, in which the "E. W." initials were cut. These initials were recut, "more deeply and indelibly sunk into it," in 1855. Title to the site now stands in the name of the President and Trustees of Williams College.

A long delay ensued before Williamstown realized its free school because the lands on which the school would be planted were claimed by the province of New York and covered by New York patents. Colonel Williams, thoroughly aware of this dispute but sanguine of its final outcome, willed that the school should be erected only if the disputed lands were held to belong to Massachusetts. The delay proved extremely fortunate, in that the more basic school needs had been satisfied in the meantime, and the Williams' bequest could be used for higher education. Also, the sum, small at the start, grew under the thrifty handling of the executors and trustees, who loaned the proceeds at interest and put out interest at interest year after year. The executors, upon action of the legislature incorporating "The Trustees of the donation of Ephraim Williams, Esq. for maintaining a Free School in Williamstown" turned over to the trustees \$11,277. This endowment

was more than doubled by a lottery. The first building, four stories high and with twenty-eight rooms for students and a chapel, arose in 1790, and November 3, 1791, the school opened.

Two years later the trustees memorialized the General Court in favor of changing the "Free School" to a not quite free college. Western Massachusetts, they said, was so distant from Cambridge that its young men drifted off to Yale, thus running into the temptations of a seaport. Also the district raised more produce than it could consume; students, assured of cheap living, would come from Vermont, New York and Connecticut. None objecting, although relatives might have made mischief by so doing, Williams College was incorporated by Act of 1793. The President drew £140 a year and house rent.

A plain man was Eph Williams, who led a life straight as a razor's edge, so completely all of one piece and substance with his kind that he almost escapes analysis as an individual and should be judged as one figure in a procession, with relation to those before and after.

Edward Everett felt the need of making Eph come to life, and so built up an imaginary Eph, volubly expressing his soul. Good oratory, but poor history. Eph died as he lived, honestly and with few words. His memory lives because he did what many Williamses no doubt

have thought of doing. He was as much a part of his age and environment as a tree, and so there was little need for him to do much talking or writing. But we catch a hint of his personal qualities in his wardrobe and may catch another in his books, as of record in the Northampton Registry of Probate, where his earthly possessions were inventoried for the benefit of his direct heirs and his indirect ones, the youth of the hill country he pioneered. They are:

Maundrell's *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*

*A Life of Oliver Cromwell*

Bishop Burnet's *Travels*

La Pluche's *Nature Displayed*, seven volumes

*A Book on Manners*

*The Reflector*

*The Spectator*, in nine volumes

*Pope's Works*, in seven volumes

*The Guardian*, in two volumes

Salmon's *A Modern Gazeteer*

*The Court and City Register*

Anson's *A Voyage Round the World*

*A Universal History from the Earliest Account of Time*,  
twenty volumes

Rapin's *History of England*

Chambers' *Dictionary*

Ridgeley's *A Body of Divinity*

Harrington's *Oceana*

Jacob's *Law Dictionary*

Delany's *Revelation Examined with Candour*

*The Independent Whig*, two volumes

*Cato's Letters*, four volumes

*Roman History by Way of Dialogue*

One sees here solid Puritan taste for a background with certain lighter variations to the fore, particularly the interest in travel, a reflection of his youthful years at sea and his ever-westering moves by land. Williams wanted to know his way about not only on land and sea, but also—witness the Court and City Register—in whatever high society he should be thrust. Even in the mazes of frontier title-mongering—witness the Law Dictionary—he wanted to be sure of his ground. But like the true Puritan he sought in the records of the mighty peoples of the past reassurance that he and his kind were on the right road to endure, long after the individual had gone his way toward a tense but tuneful heaven. His own curiosity to know his way about was the driving force which impelled Eph Williams to leave his small and hardly won fortune for education, on that day of deepest gloom when, in the strange, foreign city of Albany, he drew his will on the eve of the campaign from which he was doomed never to return.

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ROBERT ROGERS



## ROBERT ROGERS

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER fixed forever the popular conception of the American scout and Indian fighter in his *Deerslayer*, wily in his craft but simple in character as a bowstring. Perhaps, in the long march of the frontiersmen across America, there were scouts of that benign character; but, if so, they must have died early, as their environment was too cruel to tolerate sweetness for long. Those scouts whose lives have been studied in detail reveal themselves mostly as termagant, contrary persons, intensely individual, stoics both in bearing punishment and punishing others, ready for a fight or a frolic, and frequently at odds with the law of the sedate settlements which followed in their trails. It was their lot to kill the thing they loved; to prepare the way for a society in which they could not live largely and comfortably after their primitive standards and in their quaint conceits. So Meriwether Lewis killed himself untimely, George Rogers Clark and Robert Rogers slipped down into the narcosis of drunkenness, and old Bill Williams—not so old either—went forth alone on a wild-goose chase where the odds were all against his survival, even as an old dog may go on his last hunt not caring whether he returns.

As Quaife says in his memoir of Robert Rogers, all the elements of high tragedy are present in the life of this unusual man. He was a specialized being who shone gloriously in emergencies and yet failed miserably in humdrum activities. A man of instant decision in stark danger, he could not think his way through simple financial or legal problems. His moral sense seems strangely blunted in some directions, yet acute in others. He might buy your furs with counterfeit money, but he would risk his scalp rescuing you from the Indians a week later. His frailties were known and condoned when his superb powers of woodcraft and military leadership were needed; yet, his weaknesses persisted beyond the point of forgiveness and brought him to ruin in the end. If he had died at thirty-five, Robert Rogers would be to-day an American hero; if he had gone outlaw, as seemed likely at Mackinac, he might be esteemed a Yankee Robin Hood; but as the records stand, it is impossible to make him respectable. Nevertheless he performed heroic acts, and he possessed both the vision and talent to make those acts seem not merely the chance result of courage and opportunity but rather the inevitable result of an heroic character. Yet no one can rescue Rogers now from the pit he himself dug. A man for the psychologists to diagnose. Alive to-day, he would probably be in prison, with those gentle ladies who sympathize with handsome,

stalwart criminals bringing him flowers and asking for his autograph.

In this sketch I have followed, in general, Allan Nevins' *Life of Robert Rogers*, which precedes Rogers' tragedy, *Ponteach or the Savages of America*, in the 1914 edition published by the Caxton Club of Chicago. Since 1914 Nevins' work in biography has won deserved attention; but no bit of it reveals more of his painstaking industry than this early work done as an undergraduate and never widely circulated. The errors are few; the excellences many. In it he sifts all the Rogers' material then available, and, while more material has since been made available through American purchases of English manuscripts, these "finds" do not affect the value of his presentation in any important degree. Those who want a full, factual, carefully annotated life of Rogers will find one there. The chief source material on Rogers must ever be Rogers' *Journals* and the correspondence of his contemporaries with or about him, though the latter is spotted with personal feeling and interest.

It is entirely Rogersesque that for years historians argued the date of his birth. The year 1725 was accepted for some time, perhaps in deference to the fact that he saw action in King George's War, 1744-48. November 17, 1731, is now the accepted date, which

would make him fifteen when he first went seriously after scalps on border duty. Even at that age he would be no mean adversary. Physically he was almost a giant and bold beyond his years. The fourth son in a family of fighting men, he early assumed dominion over his three brothers. Though they were better men than their junior in the ordinary responsibilities of life, yet he dominated them from the start, led them to war, commanded them in the field and brought the best of them, James, to ruin in the end. For a junior to dominate a frontier family as Rogers did his brothers argues uncanny personal force. His father, clad in skins and bowed by age, was mistaken for a bear and shot by a friend when Robert was twenty-one years old; thereafter the youth had his own way.

This dominance in the family circle is the more noteworthy because Robert had less schooling than his brothers. When he was eight years old, the Rogerses moved from Methuen, Massachusetts, to Lovell's farm, across the New Hampshire line and sixteen miles from the nearest town, Rumford. Their property lay on the very edge of the frontier, and formal schooling was out of the question except when the Rogers family were driven into town by Indian raids. Two winters they spent there, slipping back to the farm for summer work, muskets within reach. In the last year of the war, Rogers' farm was destroyed by France's raiders so completely that only one apple tree of a young orchard



From a print in the *Geschichte der Kriege in und ausser Europa*, Elfter Theil, Nurnberg, 1777. This print has also been used as a frontispiece to *Ponteach, or The Savages of America*, Caxton Club, 1914.



survived. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties and interruptions, Robert Rogers managed to become literate, and something more. His original reports are badly spelled and composed, but later he wrote better than many a more broadly educated man of his time. All his published writings were edited by skilled hands.

Robert started his career promptly, in the time-honored manner of the frontier, by buying a piece of land and undertaking to clear it. He built a house and barn there in 1753, and located a tenant, while he followed the alluring life of a trader and trapper in the beautiful wilderness of New England. Probably he roved as far as New France, acquainting himself with what was destined to be his chief battle ground, the scene of some of the notable adventures in American annals, the background of his honest fame. No doubt he got into bad company on these journeys; there was plenty of it about; yet he must have traveled far and endured greatly to become the consummate woodsman that he soon showed himself to be.

From the beginning his best traits were Indian traits. His successes flowed from the application of aboriginal methods in woods warfare; drunkenness was his chief vice even as it was theirs; and his troubles may be traced largely to his lack of financial sense. The morals of money were beyond him. In a society without money or written contracts, as among the Indians, his record would have been better. The praise which he bestows

upon the social institutions of his foes comes down to this: their ways suited him better than white ways. Like many another frontiersman in whom primitive instincts ran strong, he must frequently have considered going Indian completely, as not a few of that type and training did.

Describing Indian life in his *Concise Account of North America*, he wrote:

Avarice, and a desire to accumulate, those great disturbers of the peace of society, are unknown to them; they are neither prompted by ambition, nor actuated by the love of gold; and the distinctions of rich and poor, high and low, noble and ignoble, do not so far take place among them as to cause the least uneasiness to, or excite the resentment of an individual. . . .

At another point, he says of the Illinois:

The goodness of the country . . . must render life easy and agreeable to persons who, like them, are content with having the demands of nature answered, without endeavouring to increase these demands by any studied refinements in dress, equipage, or the modes of living. In short, these people, of any upon earth, seem blessed in this world: here is health and joy, peace and plenty; care and anxiety, ambition and the love of gold, and every uneasy passion, seem banished from this happy region. . . .

As Rogers had never visited the Nirvana which he describes in the latter paragraph, it seems that he is really painting his own ideal society, where the uneasy

passions of his soul would be stilled and where bold, free beings like himself could never be hamstrung by schemers, distressed by duns, or disciplined by laws. A primitive, defeated by the civil society of his own people, he pictured the Illinois country as a delightful refuge, whither his tortured soul could escape from the complexities of the legal and economic fabric of which he was biologically a part. I find no instance of Rogers' admiration for Indian ways staying his hand when it came to life or death for Indian foes in the flesh; and certain touches in his *Journals* indicate that he could look on the death of an enemy, white or red, with a jocular cynicism. The *Journals* as published in London were not only smoothed in spelling and style, but also toned down somewhat. His original reports to his superiors, made on the spot, may be found in volume IV of the *Documentary History of New York*. There he says that he shot down an unarmed enemy because the latter refused quarter, a strange reason to assign for the execution of one virtually a prisoner at the moment.

A hard man in a hard age, Rogers fought to prove his powers, he schemed and wrote chiefly to advance himself; yet when he left fact for fancy his words bespeak the wish for an environment in which he could escape from his besetting sins. What seems a generous attitude toward the foe is, therefore, little more than confession of weakness in relation to his own kind.

Still, this inner conviction of his failure under the code of the whites brought him so far into sympathy with the Indians that he exercised in council a mighty influence over them, almost enough to bring to pass vital changes in the course of American history.

The Seven Years War began just in time to save this fumbling giant from disgrace and perhaps prison. In 1754 he had served in a New Hampshire company, yet in January, '55, he undertook to raise twenty men for a Massachusetts company, a sudden shift of loyalty which hints of troubles to come. While on enlisting duty he was arrested for counterfeiting. Evidence was strong against him. In effect he bought his release by breaking his bargain with Massachusetts and taking himself and his men into the New Hampshire service, with a callous disregard for all the niceties of conduct. He had spent King's money chargeable to Massachusetts; but, while the officials of that province raged, he went blithely up country to raise men for Blanchard's New Hampshire regiment, part of which he, as captain, led to Albany that summer for the campaign against the French post at Crown Point. The suspicions roused by this devious course never quite died out.

Quickly he made his way. Major General William Johnson, not yet Baronet, recognized in Rogers unusual abilities and put him at the work in which during the next six years Rogers made his resounding reputation as a scout. Rogers' past followed him to Fort Edward,

but Johnson put down the reports of the scout's difficulties back home as "insinuations" in a report to Governor Hardy, after Rogers had proved his uncanny ability to get information. Rogers distinguished himself in a most difficult rôle, and was rewarded, in March, 1756, by the captaincy of an independent company of Rangers, which he promptly raised on Shirley's order. The New York Assembly voted him 125 milled pieces of eight as "a gratuity for his extraordinary courage, conduct and diligence against the French and their Indians." In fact there is no record of Robert Rogers, with all his faults, ever misleading a commander in the field. Within the limits of his specialty his professional ethics were as high as his skill. Johnson, Abercromby, Loudon and Amherst believed utterly in the information he brought back from his expeditions, and they were never deceived. Moreover, he proved himself both a capable commander and a developer of men; under him were trained, amid hardships to try men's souls, such noted Indian fighters as his brother James, John and William Stark, Israel Putnam and James Dalyell, or Dalzell, who lost his life at Bloody Run near Detroit. Such men would have detected and denounced the slightest tinge of cowardice or unfairness in their leader, and the circumstances under which they marched and fought would have brought weaknesses of that sort forward, yet to the end of the Seven Years War his men swore by him. His were dangerous assignments,

involving tremendous exertions, privations and a high ratio of loss, nevertheless he could have the pick of the men on duty and never did he ask in vain for volunteers to accompany him into the very jaws of death. "Old Put" belittled Rogers' courage years later when they were on opposite sides in the Revolution, but those criticisms are not to be taken seriously. In general, there is no doubt of Rogers' bravery or competence in woods warfare.

The *Journals* record these marches and battles of Rogers and men in the north country in prosy, simple detail which becomes monotonous unless one knows the country and the military background. Time and again he penetrated to the very walls of French fortresses, noted the size and activity of the garrisons, seized a prisoner and, eluding pursuit by swiftness and stratagem, brought back the required information. From his first scout in '55, when he went forth with four men, he and the Rangers whom he organized were the eyes of the armies in that sector. At the end of his great period his force of Rangers had been built up to eight companies, he held the rank of major with pay equal to a British majority, and he led forth hundreds instead of handfuls on expeditions handled with consummate dash and courage. Under him marched, on occasion, companies detailed from crack British regiments and Indian contingents raised by his friend, Uncas, of the Mohicans. Writers of "Westerns" desir-

ing authentic details and incidents of Indian fighting will find the real thing in Rogers' *Journals*.

The colorful character of these dashes, and something of his personal prowess, can be gathered from a few instances. With a squad he lay all night close to the French fortress at Crown Point. As dawn approached he crept nearer, carrying bushes in his hand as he snailed over the ground, seeking the essential prisoner. Too many soldiers came out, however; all he could do was to kill the nearest, dash back into the forest, and outmarch his pursuers. In 1756, he passed the French forts with fifty men in whaleboats, to capture a French schooner bound for Canada. The next year, sent out to bring in a prisoner, he walked boldly down the road toward the French fort at Ticonderoga, hailed the sentry in French, seized the unlucky Gaul and spirited him back to the British camp.

In the nature of things these operations were group affairs with small numbers involved, but twice the Rangers encountered stiff opposition while out in force. In the first one, the celebrated "Battle of the Snowshoes" near Rogers' Rock, Lake George, on March 13, 1758, Rogers lost one hundred and fifty of his one hundred and eighty men, and might have lost the remainder. He escaped by tricking the enemy into believing he had slid down the five-hundred-foot face of the sloping rock on his snowshoes, an act of such audacity that the enemy Indians attributed his success

to the Great Spirit and pursued no further. The Great Spirit gave no sign of helping the wounded who, in agony, awaited the coup de grace of the tomahawk and scalping knife. The sun went down on snow more red than white on Rogers' Rock the day it found its name. Rogers' reputation did not suffer, however, from this setback, as he had been sent out with less than half the men he reported necessary.

The following summer the Rangers were ambushed near the ruins of Fort Anne by Marin's Canadians, a corps organized by Montcalm after the model set by Rogers. The major and his ever-efficient lieutenant, Dalyell, rallied the force, which repulsed four attacks, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, and held the ground while their foes drew off defeated. Coming soon after the bloody failure of the main army at Ticonderoga, this minor success was "played up" in Abercromby's dispatches to Pitt. "Rogers," he wrote, "deserves much to be commended." Rogers' fame in London grew.

\* His outstanding feat, and one which shows both the commander and his Rangers at their peak of endurance, occurred in 1759, when Rogers with two hundred men broke the power of the St. Francis Indians to scourge the frontier settlements of New England, their prey ever since the French and British began to battle in the New World in 1690. They had burned the Rogers' farmstead, and many of his Rangers had like personal

scores to settle. Amherst, the new commander-in-chief, ever harsh in Indian affairs, ordered the Rangers to "take revenge for the infamous barbarities and cruelties of the Indian scoundrels." The St. Francis raids on New England had been, indeed, ghastly affairs. Rogers himself knew of four hundred New Englanders whom they had carried away or murdered; six hundred white scalps were found hanging in their village.

In whaleboats the force began the journey by running the gauntlet of narrow Champlain in spite of patrolling French vessels. Secrecy could not be maintained, however. The boats discovered, they were pursued. Instantly Rogers decided to carry on, in the hope of outmarching the four hundred French who were on his trail. For nine days his men hurried on through a flooded wilderness, completely surprising the village, killing two hundred braves and setting the torch to their habitations. Since he could not return to Amherst by the direct route, Rogers marched up the St. Francis to Lake Memphremagog, the beautiful lake which the present national border divides. Provisions exhausted, he divided his command into parties, appointing a rendezvous at the junction of the Ammonoosuc and Connecticut rivers, where he had asked to be met with provisions. They missed the relief column by two hours and never caught up with it. Each party suffered grueling hardships. Some were overtaken and destroyed; some starved to the point of cannibalism.

Hastening on ahead with two others to rouse relief, Rogers rafted down the flooded Connecticut. Below Wattockquitchey Falls he waded alone into the icy, swirling waters to retrieve the precious raft as it took the plunge over the cataract, his weakened companions watching from the banks the struggle upon the outcome of which depended their lives. As the shadows deepened on Robert Rogers toward the end, he must often have wished that he had died there, gloriously, in that dramatic, sacrificial moment. If so, the incident would have been part of our folklore forever. The success of the raid lifted Rogers to new heights of fame. Another campaign of driving vigor brought him signal honor at the hand of Amherst, when the latter's three-way campaign forced the surrender of Montreal and the capitulation of New France in September, 1760.

Of all his officers Amherst selected Rogers to proceed west and accept the surrender of the French posts on the Great Lakes. Subject to the detailed instructions of Brigadier General Monckton at Pittsburgh, Rogers was to take the surrender of the French at Detroit and go as much farther as the approach of winter permitted. With two of his Ranger companies, a force later increased by a company of Royal Americans under Captain Donald Campbell, Rogers fought his way up the Rapids with such speed that he was at Toronto in twelve days, and at Presque Isle, the present Erie, Pennsylvania, on October 8. From Presque Isle he started

south for Pittsburgh, stopping at the abandoned French posts of Le Bœuf and Venango, and slipping down the Allegheny Valley. After three days with Monckton he returned to Presque Isle and prepared for the rough voyage on Lake Erie.

Near Presque Isle Rogers had a fateful meeting with Pontiac, lulled the latter's suspicions of British motives and established a bond of sympathy with that celebrated chief which had both literary and political results. The two men were really brothers in spirit if not in race; each could perceive in the other a brave, reckless being imbued with a sense of personal grandeur which melted into bonhomie at the touch of liquor. At heart Rogers would have enjoyed being Pontiac, standing between his people and the canny civilization of the whites; and probably Pontiac would have enjoyed being Rogers, the big white chief who fought Indian fashion, slapped scowling braves on their blanketed backs and let the morrow take care of itself. Both were great fighters and ineffective schemers.

Pontiac clearing the path, Rogers made Detroit in time to disarm the militia on December 1 and accept Bellêtre's surrender. The Major must have had a grand time during the next ten days, as Captain Campbell took responsibility for the garrison and left to the General's ambassador the social functions incident to a change of administration. So Rogers harangued the Indians in council, comforted the disturbed French resi-

dents, gave presents and received presents, celebrated His Britannic Majesty in many a toast, and reassured the bewildered French traders that there would be no confiscation of their effects.

Laughing off all warnings from those who knew the Lakes, Rogers set out for Michilimackinac on December 10, but had gone but a hundred miles on Lake Huron when he was turned back by storms. This must have been a profound disappointment; already he had his eye on that distant post, the natural center of the northern fur trade. He would have enjoyed the winter there, cut off from the world, from his creditors, from his superiors. A bold man could do something extraordinary in Mackinac.

Defeated by the elements, he battled his way back to Detroit through the ice floes, and on the 23rd set out for Pittsburgh to give Monckton a glowing report of his mission. In all truth Rogers had done supremely well in an assignment for which there was no precedent and which held all sorts of explosive possibilities. His negotiations with Bellêtre, for example, were conducted with a truly statesmanlike mixture of firmness and tact. From Pittsburgh he started overland for New York, where he arrived on February 14, after one of the most extraordinary journeys ever made in America. He was a made man, though still under thirty. His early slips had been forgiven if not forgotten. His career loomed bright ahead, and only Rogers himself could wreck it.

The military establishment did well by him. He was granted an indefinite furlough at full pay, yet complimented by a request to keep himself available for further duty when required. No native American had rendered more essential services in the Seven Years War; his journey to Detroit had closed the conflict with pomp and circumstance; Rogers stood forth as the popular idol of a people which has always held dear the frontier type of hero. As Nevins says:

Everywhere he went he was known, stared at and sought after, for every news agency for five years had rung with his exploits; everywhere he was introduced and referred to as "the famous Major Rogers."

His career seemed destined to add unto itself honor after honor. Yet this was the peak; he never stood quite as high again.

The first rebuff came at the hands of the Massachusetts General Court, to which Rogers took an old claim for arrears of pay. Rogers might be a hero and all that; but the war was over and Puritan thrift outwaited the spendthrift Ranger. Two years later he managed to screw out of the Bay Colony about a third of his claim. The delay put him in straits. To establish himself as a responsible citizen in his own neighborhood, Rogers must pay old debts, and in addition he was thinking of marriage.

It is easy for us to comprehend that Rogers should

never have married. By nature, and long training as well, he was a confirmed nomad—here to-day and away to-morrow. A good lover and bad husband. A conqueror in a quick dash, he was doomed to lose in long struggles. But bachelorhood had not then reached its present respectability. Puritan pioneers took wives no doubt because they needed them to cook, sew and keep house; but they thought they took them for holier purposes, since in New England economics and biology were ever founded on the dictates of Deity. For an able-bodied man of thirty to be unmarried in 1761 was positively indecent, an affront to God and the multiplication table. If Rogers were to wipe away the memory of his early misdeeds, to rehabilitate himself among his neighbors, he must marry soon and no nonsense. So he married Elizabeth Browne, aged twenty, daughter of Arthur Browne, rector of Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth. The Reverend Mr. Browne was an old-fashioned man. With the assistance of Mrs. Browne, or perhaps the Mesdames Browne, he had blessed himself with nine children, whom he ruled with heavy hand. Elizabeth seems to have been dazzled by the attentions of the famous and handsome Major Rogers, but her cool judgment decided against the match. Perhaps she fancied someone her own age; Rogers was ten or eleven years her senior. Yet she married the gallant major under orders, "solely in obedience to the will of my parents and friends."

Some allowance must be made for the budgetary difficulties of an aging clergyman with nine children to his credit, or debit, but it must be agreed that the Rogers-Browne nuptials got away to a bad start. To be sure, Elizabeth Rogers remained a dutiful wife through years of neglect; but Rogers was not precisely the man to find in a merely dutiful wife compensations for the clogs and expenses which matrimony thrust upon him. A termagant wife might have broken him to respectability, an utterly loving wife might have charmed him to domesticity; but Elizabeth was neither the one nor the other. She could not rule him; and she could not accept him for what he was, following him, doglike, through forest paths to the bitter end, as Pontiac's woman would follow Pontiac.

Six days after his marriage the bridegroom, recalled to service in the Cherokee war, started south, no doubt glad to get away from the stuffy, ministerial household. He made another of his thundering journeys through the Carolinas to assume command of an independent company at Fort Loudoun. Too late for the campaign, he settled into a safe and prosperous berth at £560 a year, first at Fort Loudoun and later at Fort Ninety-Six, on the frontier between the upper branches of the Sabine and Savannah rivers. Opportunity again unhinged his morals; he took side profits on Indian trade and further outraged the code of "officer and gentleman" by trading under cover on his own account.

In the late autumn of 1762 Rogers returned home to make another desperate effort to straighten his disordered finances. He went into various land deals, all of which turned out badly; and his stern father-in-law, disappointed at not being rid of a daughter in fact as well as in name, completed his financial ruin. The Reverend Arthur Browne, with a business acumen not ordinarily found in ministers of the Gospel, wrenched from Rogers his 500 acres near Rumford and three Negro slaves. He presented an amazing bill for Mrs. Rogers' support, secured a writ and set the sheriff upon his son-in-law. When this domestic cloud cleared away, Rogers' estate had dwindled to £50, and even that slender sum was under attachment, while he had signed notes for £4,100. To complete his misfortunes, his virtuous wife clung to him; years later she obtained a divorce by special act of the New Hampshire legislature, but for the present her stern New England conscience drove her to sacrifice herself and her husband's peace of mind as well.

Rogers, happy and honest only in the field of war, must have listened hopefully for the bugles to blow again. Blow they did right soon and lustily, as his friend, Pontiac, led the Michigan tribes to the attack on Detroit. Rogers answered promptly but was chagrined to find that the rescue to which he had been summoned was to be led by his old associate, Dalyell. Amherst's coolness toward Rogers at this time prob-

ably was due to the fact that his trading operations in the south had come to light. Still any war in the west was better than the family war he had to wage in New Hampshire, and off Rogers went, whistling, in Dalyell's train. The two veteran officers, eluding the wrath which had destroyed Cuyler's relief force, landed their detachment at Detroit without being discovered and fought their way into the fort on July 28. From that moment Detroit was safe. Three days later Dalyell died in the action at Bloody Run and Rogers barely escaped.

A truce of a sort was patched up in the autumn. The braves wanted to go hunting and Major Gladwin desired to shorten garrison to save food supplies. After the first assault, the fort had often been on short rations, but never in danger of being carried by assault. Accordingly more than two hundred men were sent to Niagara in November. Rogers left Detroit after the main detachment, accompanied by two Mohawks. At Niagara he fell again into his old ways of trading illicitly with Indians. This time he was fairly caught through forfeiting a bond given in return for goods to a trader, who complained to Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs and then at the height of his power. Eight years before Johnson had relied on Rogers' scouting ability in the Lake George campaign, overlooking the suspicions roused by earlier misdeeds; but this affair at Niagara was too flagrant to be

easily overcome. Rogers surrendered his commission, his only dependable financial prop, in January, 1764, and set out for New York. Henceforth Johnson never trusted him. Rogers' inability to withstand the temptation of profiting in small, illegal transactions had raised against him the most influential man on the frontier, one who would gladly have stood his friend against all the world if Rogers had kept straight.

For a year Rogers dallied in and around Portsmouth, dickering in real estate but not profitably, if we except the acquisition of 3,000 acres in Vermont, granted him by New Hampshire for his military services. But even this was soon put under mortgage. He continued deeply in debt, and made no effort to set up house-keeping. In March, 1765, he set out for England in an effort to find through distant official favor the advancement which American officials, largely through his own weaknesses, would not help him to obtain.

It was a year when American military heroes did rather well in London, and Rogers attracted notice from the start. The backwoods hero, in his Ranger uniform, became a marked figure on the streets and in the drawing-rooms of the imperial capital. London loves a picturesque, confident man, and Rogers was all of that, to judge from the print of him circulated there and in Germany, a print which is the best portrait of him. It shows a strong, bold face, boyish and unwrinkled, of one who never quite grew up to the full responsibilities

of manhood. A tremendous nose bespeaks leadership in action; a sensuous mouth hints at the appetites which beset him to his undoing. For all the crudeness of the sketch, the artist seems to have caught the essential Rogers as he revealed himself in his career—a man to follow in action, a man to shun in council.

Rogers sought in London preferment for a better post in frontier America than the responsible officials on the ground would give him. To this end he laid siege to influential persons in private and also to public opinion. He gave his *Journals* to the press, and the same bookseller, John Millan, brought forth at the same time, October, 1765, the fruits of Rogers' travels and observations, *A Concise Account of North America*. The *Journals* record modestly, and with no touch of narrative ability, his campaigns from 1755 to 1760. The style is "awkward and poverty-stricken"; but the performance as a whole seems to be straightforward enough. He does not overpraise himself; his deeds rose higher than his words, and it is easy at this distance to understand how his modesty in print, so contrary to his flamboyant appearance and ready repartee, won the confidence of captious men in London offices. This impression must have grown, too, as his audience read the *Concise Account*, one of the most informing descriptions of their vast realty holding offered to the English public up to that time. On the older regions, it smacks of older guidebooks, but in describing the

frontier stretches which he knew so well Rogers was really adding to the store of knowledge.

On Indian manners and customs he wrote at length, with a sympathetic understanding to which American frontiersmen in general would hardly subscribe and which would seem even mawkish except for two substantial reasons, one political, the other psychologic. The Indians were beginning to be appreciated as a pillar of British power in America; the strongest of them were allies of the Crown, not of the several colonies. Already colonial unrest was rising; the hostile reception of the stamps in Charleston, in the very month during which Rogers' books were published, showed that Britain had to deal with an America more independent in spirit than existed before France had been beaten and the Indians of the South and Northwest defeated. To praise Indians in the London of 1765 would raise Rogers' stock, both at court and in the bookstalls. Moreover, as we have seen, there was a real kinship between Rogers, the Ranger, and the red men from whom he had learned the ways of woods warfare.

Altogether Rogers showed himself aware of America geographically but not socially, except in the one direction of the Indians. Of the manners and customs of the whites he makes far less than of those of the Indians, and he is so far blind to the racial complexity of America that his description of Pennsylvania con-

tains no mention of German settlers and he says extremely little about slavery in describing the southern colonies.

After these modest literary successes Rogers' sole attempt at poetic drama, the anonymously published but easily identified *Tragedy of Ponteach*, came as a sharp let-down. Neither Rogers nor his close companion, Nathaniel Potter, who helped the Major with his other compositions, possessed facility in verse. At this distance the *Tragedy* possesses chiefly antiquarian interest, as the second play written by an American; but the analyst of Rogers' contrary nature can see in it fresh proof of the man's yearning for the simple life of the tepee as a reaction against the social constraints of his own more highly organized people. The production lacks all genuineness and spontaneity; it contains no trace of the racy jargon of the backwoods white or the naturalistic poetry of the Indian orator. Clearly it was written for the market, to meet the burning curiosity of the stay-at-home English regarding the personality of their dusky and distant foeman. But even such a ready-made market failed to swallow the *Tragedy of Ponteach*.

While these literary efforts were under way, Rogers kept pressing for a job in the American Northwest. On August 12 he presented a memorial urging a search for the Northwest Passage. Given £28,762 and two hundred men, he would press across the continent, fol-

low the "Ouragon" down to Puget Sound and then seek out the Northwest Passage by proceeding along the Alaskan coast. The last phase would have stumped him, but a well-found expedition might have crossed America in 1766 with scarcely more hardship, perhaps with less, than Lewis and Clark experienced forty years later; while the consequences of the journey at the earlier date would certainly have changed somewhat the political development of the continent. Both contenders entered the Revolution unaware of the rich lands beyond the Mississippi, and British policy regarding the West after the Revolution remained befogged by lack of geographic information. It seems unlikely that Shelburne, or any other Englishman, would have yielded the Northwest so easily in 1783 if they had been aware of the riches and beatitudes of the trans-Mississippi prairies.

This project failed of support, no doubt because it involved diplomatic dangers; but Rogers won a lesser appointment supremely to his taste—the command at Michilimackinac. He had started for that post five years earlier, in the full swing and pride of his western journey as the representative of his sovereign taking the surrender of his foes. One wonders what his course would have been if he had reached Mackinac in '60 instead of '66. In the meantime he had slipped backward; he had lost the confidence of Johnson and Gage, and passion for strong drink and gambling rode him hard.

The Commander-in-Chief and the Indian Superintendent were alike amazed and incensed by Rogers' appointment. Johnson wrote Gage that Rogers has "neither understanding nor character, as I can sufficiently show." Still, Johnson's nature was big enough to allow him to express "pain to find a useful, active man struggling under distress and a bad name." The Superintendent was for putting him under strict orders and short allowance, with which Gage agreed. When Rogers appeared at Johnson Hall in February, his host made these restrictions so definite that Rogers must have understood clearly the limitations of his command.

One pictures these two extraordinary persons sitting before the fireplace in Johnson Hall, a bottle of the Baronet's excellent Madeira within reach. Johnson had discovered Rogers at Lake George, giving the young Ranger the first chance to show his powers on the great stage. Himself a hard, quick man, Johnson liked other hard, quick men; he liked the Rogers' type and was distressed that he could not trust the fellow. Still, he hoped Rogers would "act a proper part at Mackinac, prove of service to the public, extricate himself from his difficulties, and deserve a better character than the public for some time has bestowed upon him." The Baronet was fifteen years older than his guest, and governing Indian wards had fixed in him a paternal pattern of mind. He talked to Rogers as a father

would; but all the time the shrewd Irishman, who rarely failed in character reading, probably knew that he might as well be talking to the wind as to this wild, uncontrollable child of nature.

Nevertheless, Johnson must have poured out his soul on the great experiment he was inaugurating for the control of Indian trade. A keen trader himself in the old days, Johnson believed that the root of the recurring Indian rages was unfair trade, that the exactions of private traders over-reaching the Indians in barter, and ruining them with drink, destroyed the very base of peaceful expansion for British power. To offset this, Johnson had prepared a system of trade control, with settled prices for goods in barter for the various sorts of furs. He aimed to establish at the various posts trusted commissaries to watch the traders and, with the assistance of the military commanders, enforce his regulations. Traders were to be forbidden to carry goods to the native villages; instead, the Indians were to bring in their furs and bargain under the eyes of the commissaries. Clearly, this plan would fail unless the commissaries were adequately supported by the post commanders. Because Mackinac was so isolated and distant, the new system would meet a supreme test there. Johnson must have tried to convince Rogers of the benefits of these trade restrictions, while making it equally clear to Rogers that the latter must not interfere in either Indian trade or politics, except as directed.

In this Gage also agreed and sent to Rogers this blanket veto on expenses: "Nothing new or chargeable must on any account be done by you upon your own head." In all Indian affairs Rogers must report to Johnson, keep the traders in order, and send in regular reports under affidavit.

From Johnson Hall Rogers returned to New Hampshire to get his wife. The poor woman drew back from the prospect of living with her wild man in a wilderness post, but her reverend father urged her to the sacrifice. On their way to the West the ill-mated couple stopped for a time at Oswego, where, on Johnson's orders, Rogers prepared the scene for the eventful council which marked Pontiac's return to the favor of the British Crown. There also came Benjamin Roberts, whom we shall meet again at Mackinac. One of Johnson's trusted aides, he soon clashed with Rogers on the location assigned the traders at Oswego. Thus early Rogers began to flout the Indian service. Presently came to council the dusky lord of the forest, Pontiac, whom Rogers had failed in dramatizing yet who remains to this day a vital, dramatic figure in American history. No doubt they told each other many tall stories over their cups; the wine and rum bills for Pontiac's entertainment, still in existence, reveal that diplomacy found uses for alcohol, then as now.

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers boated on to Mackinac. The Major took with him theoretically as secretary but actu-

ally as first aid in his revels, the same Nathaniel Potter, who, in London, had helped to put the books to press. A weak and somewhat knavish dandy was Mr. Potter, entirely out of place in the pinched fort and on the bleak sand dunes of Mackinac. For a time he was Rogers' main confidant, and it was probably Potter who fanned the flames of ambition to white heat in his chief's mind. At any rate, Rogers soon gave evidence that he had no intention of following instructions. He began to cultivate the tribes with presents; he let the traders "go wintering" in Indian villages. With the "Yankee" traders he grew immensely popular, and his relaxation of instructions in their favor may not have been without its reward. In his isolated post, protected from interference for a time at least by winter, his mind's eye turned toward the vast, unchartered region to the west and north. The opportunity to do something there to recoup his fortune seems to have touched his reason.

Probably no one will ever know precisely what Rogers planned. He was no steady, rational intelligence, proceeding logically, planning definitely. Think of him rather as a natural force, a volcano of energy, his ideas shooting this way or that. Always at the mercy of appetite, Rogers poor and Rogers rich would plan quite differently; so also Rogers drunk and Rogers sober. But certainly he played with the idea of doing something mighty and epoch-making

from that seemingly safe base of his at Mackinac. That his great stroke might lie quite outside of his instructions seems not to have deterred him in the least.

First, there came the mysterious expedition of Jonathan Carver, the exploration beyond the Mississippi which produced his *Travels Through the Interior of America*, a book published in London, in 1779, which enthralled Europe, and ran into thirty editions. Carver knew Rogers in the Lake George country, followed the Major to Mackinac, and after conferences, set out for the West as the leader of an exploring detail outfitted at Crown expense. Presumably Rogers intended to have Carver winter beyond the Mississippi, and to join him early the next spring. The two might make a try for the Pacific on government funds, whether the government consented or not, in the belief that the travelers would be forgiven if they returned—and if they did not return, no matter.

Second, Rogers sent presents and messengers to distant tribes, buying the presents from local traders at high prices and paying for them with unauthorized drafts on Johnson. These transactions proved extremely costly, and the motive could hardly be other than desire to exalt himself at the expense of the Indian service as a whole. It is no wonder that his watchful enemies concluded he was up to mischief on a grand scale. By spring he had alienated all the better men at the post

by his loose living and associations with the dregs of the community.

Of course these costly projects may have been merely preliminary steps toward the proposed reorganization of the Northwest, the plan of which he sent direct to the Lords of Trade and Plantations on May 29, 1767, ignoring Johnson, the usual channel for such communications. This document attacked Johnson's trade regulations, which in all truth were probably unworkable in that distant area, and advocated a combined civil and military government for the entire Northwest, with Mackinac as the center and Rogers as governor, responsible only to the King's ministers. In effect, he proposed to establish a fourteenth colony.

On paper the plan had certain merits. It would organize, after a fashion, a rich trade area doomed to be cut off from the seaboard at least half of the year. There was no fixed English population, and the Indian population was less well organized than the tribes which Johnson had been accustomed to manage from his seat on the Mohawk. While the colonies with conflicting territorial claims certainly would have objected, their claims might have been settled by small money payments. It is at least possible that Rogers' plan for a separate government at Mackinac might have saved to Britain the whole upper Great Lakes region. But there were stern practical arguments against it. Britain was trying vainly to collect through unpopular

taxes in the colonies a small fraction of the cost of whipping France and Pontiac. London, at the moment, sought to retrench in America instead of trying new political adventures. But the greatest obstacle to Rogers' plan was Rogers himself. Bad as his reputation was, it had not yet caught up to his conduct during his first disgraceful winter on his distant assignment.

While this imposing document was on its way to London, and before Johnson had been able to impose any effective check upon the high-flying commandant at Mackinac, Rogers called in the tribes for a great council. Here he was at his old best, free with goods and affluent with vague promises. All in all, it seems to have been a successful council, but the bill ran to £5,000, an unjustifiable sum in Johnson's opinion and far beyond any legitimate need.

On June 23, Johnson's commissary, the same Benjamin Roberts who had quarreled with Rogers at Oswego the preceding summer, arrived at Mackinac to supervise the Indian trade. Like Rogers, Roberts had a way with Indians, but unlike Rogers, he was a servant faithful to his orders. He was scandalized by the loose conduct of the post, the open flouting of all regulations which seemed to him sacred. Rogers defiantly supported a rather villainous group of traders, and without his aid Roberts could not even suppress the illicit rum trade. He went about his work of licensing the traders, and securing bonds for good behavior from

them when they took their cargoes from the post; but did so in constant fear of plots and treachery. Roberts found an ally, however, in Captain Spiesmacher, a solid German in direct command of the troops.

All through the turbulent Rogers' régime Spiesmacher was like a rock of refuge amid swirling waters. Worse men than Roberts sought his protection from the commandant, notably the tricky Nathaniel Potter, Rogers' secretary, who was ordered into irons in June, after disgraceful scenes between Rogers and Potter occurred before the soldiery. To this day no one knows precisely why Rogers and the Englishman quarreled. The latter hinted dark things, from which Roberts concluded that the commandant had determined to loot the post and make for the wilderness to join the French on the Mississippi. Through August Roberts and Rogers fought one another over rum withdrawals, until Roberts, having denounced Rogers openly, was confined, to be sent east later for trial by General Gage on charges of insubordination. In the meantime Potter had appeared at Montreal, made deposition of Rogers' alleged treachery, and departed for England; and Gage had sent back orders to Spiesmacher to arrest his superior. Rogers' detention began about the time Roberts' ended.

Major Rogers remained at Mackinac under arrest until the spring thaw permitted him to be sent east. He certainly planned an escape, excusing himself later

on the ground of cruel treatment, but it is impossible to unravel the skein of intrigue and decide how much truth lies in Spiesmacher's tale of discovering a plot by which Rogers intended to break away, join the renegade Hopkins, then in French service on the Mississippi, and deliver the lakes country to the control of Louisiana. Honest though Spiesmacher was, he was too biased to weigh evidence coolly, and the testimony of too many scoundrels is involved to prove so many melodramatic details.

Fittingly enough, a final touch of drama marked Rogers' departure from the post where this tragedy had been played out. The Chippewas made a demonstration in his favor, threw their English belts of wampum into the lake, and exhorted the other tribes to effect a rescue; but the garrison drew up under arms and Rogers, in irons, was loaded into the sloop bound for Niagara. The stalwart Major limped the end of his days as a result of tight gyves. Those were brutal times, and Rogers himself had sent the relatively harmless Roberts away in irons.

At Montreal the charges were reduced from treason to mutiny, but Rogers could not be convicted even of the lesser charge. Potter's prior departure for England had removed the chief witness to the intrigue with the French, the traders could not be brought in to testify on embezzlement, and there was a general disposition to let the Major off easily, now that Macki-

nac was rid of him. Details of the Rogers' court-martial may soon be gleaned from the minutes brought back from England to America in the Gage Papers, purchased in England by Mr. William L. Clements of Bay City and ultimately to be housed in the Clements Library at Ann Arbor.

To the public, however, Rogers was still a hero, and he carried popular favor off with a grin and a growl, challenging Roberts to duel and behaving so truculently that the military put both men under bonds to keep the peace. Nevertheless, he was utterly without standing in official circles, and once more sought to rehabilitate himself in England. The pose of martyr-hero might work in London. He sailed in June, 1769.

With sublime effrontery Rogers pushed his way into the circles which had accepted him before, and tapped the royal Treasury for £3,000 sterling; but his drive for a baronetcy and a pension failed, his creditors still pursued him, and he vainly sought a lucrative post in either America or India. Finally he was reduced to begging for a renewal of his commission, with its fifteen shillings a day. His creditors closed down on him and put him in debtors' prison, from which he seems to have been rescued by his worthy and amiable brother, James, who gave bond for many of the Major's debts. There follow twenty months of silence, which may have been filled by a tour of mercenary soldiering under the Bey of Algiers. Back in London in early 1775, he was

restored to his majority, failed of an Indian appointment, and, roused by the prospect of action in the revolution which was sweeping his native New England, sailed for America in June.

Rogers puzzled the new authorities of America even more than he did the old ones. They did not trust him, kept him under surveillance, yet did not arrest him for nearly a year. He visited many persons including his wife and his brother; yet made small headway in settling his affairs.

He petitioned the province of New York, as a veteran soldier, for tracts of land in various places: on the west side of Lake George; opposite the mouth of the Sacandaga River; another adjoining Cambridge; and several others in present Vermont, then administered by New York. Never modest in his requests, he desired the Lake George tract to be erected into a township and named Mount Rogers. On the eve of independence, with public affairs in disorder, there was no chance for him at Albany, and these documented applications may have been a blind to justify his presence there.

Probably he was hesitating with which side to throw his fate. I fancy his reflections always came round to this: which side would win? In his makeup there was very little abstract idealism, and the King's gold, to one who was in the habit of taking it with or without warrant, would outweigh in the end a good deal of

colonial paper. His course became so devious that July 4, 1776, saw him a prisoner in Philadelphia "lying in the very shadow of Independence Hall, at the birth of the United States." July 8 he escaped to join Howe in New York.

American Loyalists were of all shades of type and opinion, from high-minded gentlemen down to cut-throats, but not many of them served the King's cause worse than did Robert Rogers. Always a successful recruiter, he raised the "Queen's American Rangers" in short order, organized the battalion badly and led it to defeat at Mamaroneck, New York, on October 21. Clearly the Major had slumped as a military man. Others took over his battalion and brought it to high morale and efficiency, but Rogers' fighting days were done.

His name, however, still had a touch of magic in it, and for that reason he managed to cling to the payroll as a recruiting officer, with headquarters in Canada. There he padded his muster rolls, collected the increment, and floated so many bad bills that he fled back to England to avoid the storm, leaving his faithful brother to bankrupt himself in the effort to pay the claims. In twenty years Robert Rogers had slipped from the high rôle of national hero to that of exile, skulking aboard ship to escape the wrath of honest Haldimand. His magnificent physique riddled by drink, reputation and fortune gone beyond recall, Rogers crossed the

Atlantic for the last time in April, 1780, to sink into bleary obscurity in hospitable London.

Republics may be ungrateful, but the British monarchy rarely casts adrift one who has extended the Empire. Notwithstanding his latter-day peculations in Canada, Rogers went on the halfpay list in 1783 at five-and-a-half shillings a day and clung there until May 18, 1795, when he died in poor lodgings in the parish of Newington Butts, in the south of London. Tradition, says Nevins, ascribes to him vicious and improvident last years. No doubt he declined into an ale-house brawler, cadging drinks and paying for them with round-oathed tales of his adventures and maudlin recitals of his misfortunes. No newspaper noticed his death, his burial place has been paved over and none can say exactly where lie the bones of Robert Rogers, once the hero of America and the toast of London.

Nevertheless this strange being is not without one of the grandest monuments to bear the name of mortal man—the scarred mountainside beside Lake George, “Rogers’ Rock.” There tourists get some smattering of this strange story. They would hardly get more if he were buried in Westminster Abbey.

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JAMES CLINTON



## JAMES CLINTON

*Clinton (Anglo-Scandinavian): Dweller on the farmstead by the headland or crag.*

NORSE CLINTS went to France, and helped to found Normandy. Norman Clintons followed William the Conqueror to England to become English barons. In Elizabeth's stormy reign, one of them advanced to Lord High Admiral and was created Earl of Lincoln. "Never first, but always in the van—the clearest pedigree in England."

A younger son of a younger son, William Clinton, clung to his king too long, went into exile abroad, tried Scotland and settled in Ireland. His grandson, Charles, came to America in 1729 and took root in Old Ulster, New York. Partly because Charles II refused to honor the claim to Clinton lands lost in Charles I's cause, and partly because the Irish branch became Presbyterians, Charles Clinton arrived in America a stout democrat. Nevertheless, generations of feudal pride are not easily sloughed off. In his will he asked that the Clinton arms be carved upon his headstone. Long since the headstone went to dust, but we know that carving was almost identical with the arms of the earldom of Lin-

coln, as quartered in the coat-of-arms of the present ducal house of Newcastle-under-Lyme. In fact the old Clinton-Lincoln arms were the first seal of the young State of New York; before the state had adopted a state seal, George Clinton, son of Charles and the first governor of the state, sealed his documents with the signet ring which had come down to him from his father.

This fact appears to dispose of the theory that the ancestors of the American Clintons had been long in Ireland. No doubt there have been Clintons in Ireland for many centuries, probably since the days of Strongbow's Norman invasion of the Emerald Isle, 1171; but the ancestors of the historic American Clintons, on the evidence of seal and crest, must have gone there after Elizabeth's day. If George Clinton had used the more ancient arms of the Clinton barony to seal his New York documents, the issue might still be considered open; but his seal is of the later Lincoln earldom; hence its use bears out at all points the traditional story of William Clinton's migration to Ireland about 1650.

Charles Clinton, grandson of William, brought the name and ring to Old Ulster, New York. He was a surveyor, an elder, a man of some learning and solid leadership. His unpublished *Journal* is a valuable source record of the migration of his group and of the campaign of 1758. A handsome man, too; the Clin-

tons on both sides of the water have been marked by physical beauty. Ideal frontier material because of his patience, strength and endurance. At the age of sixty-eight, he led the 2d Ulster regiment to the campaign of 1758, and participated in the raid on Fort Frontenac, north of Lake Ontario, which was the first complete success of the British and colonial struggle with France in the Seven Years War.

Locating on the Johnson patent near Little Britain, six miles from the Hudson River, Charles Clinton and his wife, Elizabeth, reared there a large family, including four sons. The two older were educated in medicine at Princeton; one of them died on the near-by frontier while fighting confluent smallpox. The father taught James, the third son, his trade of surveyor, and the fourth, George, read law to excellent purpose, becoming a past master in the political art—a surrogate of Ulster and the first State governor of New York, continuing in that office for many more years than any other governor to date, and rounding out his career with two terms as Vice-President of the United States. Except for a smart deal of Aaron Burr, George Clinton might well have been President. "Always in the van but never first." Nevertheless, so strongly have the Clintons appealed to Americans, that there are more Clinton postoffices in the United States than are named for any President save Washington.

In a family as united as the Clintons, both in their

public and private lives, selecting one of the family group for presentation creates difficulties, especially when the one selected is blanketed by his better known kinsmen. It was James Clinton's good luck, domestically, and his bad luck, historically, to have a tremendously able younger brother in Governor George Clinton, and a tempestuously able son in Governor De Witt Clinton, also mayor of New York City, United States senator, candidate for the Presidency and builder of the Erie Canal. Sandwiched between two such relatives, James's light, which shone brightly of itself, seems dim by comparison. Nevertheless here's for James, the quiet brother of a great politician never at a loss for soothing words, the reserved father of a truly grandiloquent son. We shall perhaps get nearer to the basic Clinton quality in studying James than in studying George and De Witt.

Physically James was a typical Clinton in stature but not quite up to his father in beauty of feature or benevolence of aspect. Though a strapping youth he never reached the mountainous proportions of Brother George. A sketch showing James in civilian attire, perhaps just before the Revolution, reveals an erect figure and a spare, strong, bony face—apparently a powerful man in hard training. Long nose, nutcracker jaw, high cheekbones—a resolute face before which mutinous troops would quail and in which spies doomed to hang could find no sign of mercy. A later portrait, also in

profile, shows the General in his continental uniform of buff and blue, probably painted soon after the close of the Revolution. In the interval he has put on flesh, but is still straight as a ramrod in back, shoulder and neck—the West Point pose. Yet his West Point days were done long before the United States Military Academy was founded.

Essentially James Clinton was a soldier. His father and brother were only incidentally soldiers; their careers would still be notable without soldiering, as his son's was; but James had no career outside of war. In a sense he was the incarnation of the military spirit. Amid so many bickering generals, jealous as prima donnas one of another, the young Republic had sore need of men who would go where they were told to go, ask no questions and meet the needs of novel situations as best they could. The sovereign state cannot exist without soldiers schooled to obedience; no sovereign state can be born without such calm, stern midwives as James Clinton, imperious in command, yet humble in taking orders. His attitude was ever that of a plain man out to get a nasty job done. No officer fought harder for his men or domineered them more absolutely, no kind family man could hang a Tory with face more set than his against clemency which delayed victory. Amid intrigues and cabals he moved as if unaware of their existence—a selfless soldier intent on a cause.

No doubt there were many men of that stamp in the colonial armies. The career men, the ambitious men, the plotters and connivers, take up vast space in recent histories. No wonder, for they are interesting psychic studies. But under them and behind them and around them worked, we may be certain, a large number of steady-going commanders who carried the brunt of the load. Let James Clinton stand as a type representing these unsung hundreds.

We think of a pacific citizenry, unschooled in war, leaping to arms at the dawn of the Revolution. That, of course, is a fallacy. The colonies had been reared on war from the cradle. War on the frontiers was the price of security, of expansion. The four wars with France crowded so closely together that each generation of colonists passed on both martial tradition and martial habit. Militia training might slump between conflicts, but training of some sort endured, and veterans were always on hand to train the striplings. When the Revolution began, in 1775, there were men in every community who had marched against the French fifteen to twenty years before. The Major General of Massachusetts militia, Seth Pomeroy, had been in the desperate siege of Louisburg in 1745; the captains who led their local companies toward Concord had tasted fire at Lake George, Ticonderoga or elsewhere along the faint line between French Canada and British America. We can see how stalwarts of the American

Revolution were made in the French wars by following the early career of James Clinton.

He was the third of four sons born in America to Elizabeth Dennistoun Clinton, who had lost two children on the terrible voyage across the Atlantic. James arrived August 9, 1736. Schoolmasters not being always within reach, Charles Clinton gave the education of his sons close personal attention; while James was still young it was decided the boy should be trained in his father's profession of surveyor. He showed a talent for mathematics and clear, practical thinking. So the elder boys went away to college, but James stayed at home—his father's right hand in the multiple duties of frontier life, surveying, farming and soldiering.

He developed early. At sixteen James drilled with the militia company; at eighteen he did frontier duty; at twenty-one he was a lieutenant commanding a blockhouse. In 1755, with Braddock defeated on the Monongahela, the Delawares in the near-by "Endless Mountains" of Pennsylvania dreamed of recovering their beautiful valley, or at least that part of it from which they had been ousted by fraud thirty odd years before. By 1756 the white frontier folk had been driven back east of the Wallkill, abandoning an area fifteen miles long by seven or eight in breadth. A memorial sent to the General Assembly in March of that year sets forth the wretched state of southern Ulster where the Clinton homestead was located:

The people have been kept in frequent and almost perpetual alarm, whereby the inhabitants have been kept in perpetual military duty so as to be rendered incapable of taking care of their private affairs and the hardships attending these military duties in watching and ranging the woods has been so great that the people are distressed and almost worn out with fatigue.

The next year Lieutenant James took his company of the 2d Ulster north to the militia rendezvous at Fort Edward, a rally designed to save Fort William Henry from surrender to Montcalm. But the British general, Webb, refused to move to Monro's aid; refused, even, to let Sir William Johnson lead his 4,500 willing militiamen to the aid of the beleaguered garrison, while the regulars remained in safety at Fort Edward. So the 2d Ulster came home again, with less regard for British valor than before they marched.

A year later James, now a company commander, set forth again for the northern battle lines. His father, lieutenant colonel at sixty-eight, led the regiment; but was detached for duty in the Mohawk Valley before the debacle at Ticonderoga. James also missed Ticonderoga, because his father had need of him to act as aide; the shift led both father and son into the most decisive action of the war to date, the raid on Fort Frontenac under Bradstreet, described elsewhere. James came home from that campaign a "made" soldier; in Bradstreet he had found a commander who could follow through, and he had proved his courage in action.

In preparation for the mopping-up campaign of 1760, James raised a new company, drilled it and as its captain followed the commander-in-chief, Sir Jeffery Amherst, from Albany, up the Mohawk, across to Oswego, and down the St. Lawrence with the great flotilla which, in faultless conjunction with the other converging columns from Crown Point and Quebec, brought forth the French capitulation of 1760. On the voyage down river he won notice in the seizure of French vessels. In his company, and probably participating in this action, was his younger brother, George. The statement is freely made, in biographical sketches of George Clinton, that he went to sea as a privateersman at the tender age of sixteen. There seems to be no warrant for the tale; I think George's only marine experience was sailing down the St. Lawrence. George lived longer than James, long enough to become an old hero maundering of his adventures, yet he never seems to have mentioned privateering, and a campaign sketch fathered by him contains no reference to a subject which would have been good material for his supporters to expound to the voters.

On their return from the war, George Clinton went to New York City to read law in the office of the noted William Smith, while James settled into the routine of country surveyor, farmer and militia leader. Responsibility in all these lines must have fallen upon him with his father's advancing age and the latter's

acceptance of the post of county judge. There was another flare of border trouble in 1763, the year of Pontiac's War. James, as captain commandant of two hundred frontier guards, took charge of the border and built a row of small forts in the Neversink country, to guard against invasion by the Munsies. Somewhat romantically he named the most important of these posts Fort De Witt, after his sweetheart's family.

On February 8, 1765, James Clinton married Mary De Witt, who gave her family name to her distinguished son, born 1769. She had three other sons, but De Witt is the only one of importance enough to rouse controversy as to the place of his birth. He might have been born at his grandfather De Witt's house, or at Fort De Witt, or in a house James Clinton owned near the old family homestead in Little Britain, or at the house in New Windsor where James Clinton early established his family. The evidence favors the last-named site; at least on-the-spot investigators, from Lossing down to the Reverend Mr. Elwood Corning, who courteously escorted me over the Clinton country and gave me the results of his patient investigations of local history, agree on that location. Lossing pictures the house practically as it stands to-day, with only such variations as time and decay decree. It must have been a pleasant house in its prime, when James and Mary Clinton occupied it with their vociferous babes. From the east windows and the pillared porch one commands

a wide sweep of the Hudson and the eastern Highlands. The neighborhood is not what it was in the old days, since the old village of New Windsor is now a somewhat decayed suburb of the more bustling Newburgh; the two villages stood almost on an equality when James Clinton took residence there. Beyond a doubt a choice site when infant De Witt Clinton and his mother sat on the porch and watched the sloops sail slowly by on waters one day to carry, thanks to De Witt himself, barges laden with grain in Buffalo, not even a name on the maps as yet.

Always exact and competent with records, and knowing every mete and bound in the town, James Clinton became town clerk in 1769 and continued until 1775. In that year of upheaval, he was also colonel of the old regiment, the 2d Ulster. His Continental Line regiment, the 3d New York, was equipped by the end of August in gray coats with green cuffs and facings, long waistcoats and knee-length breeches of Russian drilling, linen cravats, round, low-brimmed felt hats and low shoes. The equipment had changed little from the militia requirements—musket with bayonet and stiff ramrod, sword or tomahawk, cartouche box containing twenty-three rounds of bullets and twelve flints, knapsack, one pound of powder and three pounds of bullets. A little later, the gray coats would give way to hunting frocks, and shortage of cloth was rated cause enough for letting a soldier wear leather

breeches, if he could get them. Not until 1780 did the continental uniform of buff and blue become standard equipment.

James Clinton acted as leader of local patriots in the break of 1775. Ten days after the clash at Concord, he signed the Articles of Association cementing New York's alliance with Massachusetts. On May 8, his name appears first on the Committee of Safety for his neighborhood, and he was chosen to represent his county at the Provincial Convention called to assemble at New York on May 25. A fire-eating patriot, he asked the Convention later to let him "work the gentry a little" with the three companies of Rangers which had been raised for local service. Home guards can be trusted in matters of that sort; the gentry had better behave. As a matter of fact, there were few Tories in James' bailiwick; the population was mostly Presbyterian Irish around Little Britain, and Dutch and German along the river. The outstanding Tories were the Coldens. For years Cadwallader Colden and Charles Clinton had been neighbors and warm friends; now their sons were at odds, Clintons dominant.

Presently, however, James went after bigger game than Tories. The new state reorganized its military establishment; Clinton became colonel of the 3d New York regiment rated at ten companies of eighty-three men each; but like most continental regiments, the lists were seldom full. The 3d New York went north

in the summer with Brigadier General Richard Montgomery for the conquest of Canada.

This pathetic yet gallant campaign was based upon the belief that the French were as ready to throw off the British yoke as were the Americans. Political strategy, rather than military, dominated the preparations. Let American troops appear in Canada and a grateful French population would do the rest. But the British, beforehand in passing the Quebec Act of 1774, brought the French seigneurs and higher clergy to their support, and the cause of independence suffered from the occasional fulminations of Samuel Adams and other New Englanders against Roman Catholicism. Montgomery's brave little army, 2,000 men ill-equipped for the rigors of a northern winter, followed a forlorn hope from the moment it began the drive, notwithstanding Ethan Allen's preliminary capture of Ticonderoga. Even so, it took St. John's, Chambly and Montreal and threatened Quebec for six months.

In a small way, the expedition anticipated Napoleon's march into wintry Russia. Winter, rather than the foe, wrecked it. On November 13, Montreal fell, but the great objective was Quebec. A winter attack on that stout fortress seems at this distance to have been sheer folly; if the Americans had dug in at Montreal and hung to it for a year, Canadian opinion might have swung round to them, the pro-American feeling among the British in Canada being quite strong. As it was

the Americans risked everything on one throw of the dice. The decision seems to have rested with the Continental Congress, which authorized Benedict Arnold to proceed with eleven hundred men up the Kennebec Valley, through Maine, and to join Montgomery in front of Quebec. Arnold's march began from Newburyport, Massachusetts, on September 18. Seven weeks later, seven hundred survivors of that terrible march stood on the heights of Levis opposite their goal. Hungry, half-naked or worse, with few cannon and their ammunition mostly gone wrong, the survivors of that grim Odyssey called on the proud old city to surrender. It was a bold gesture, but useless; the inhabitants, upon whose favor everything depended, did not rise to the occasion, while the soldiery, particularly the Royal Irish, did.

Montgomery brought part of his troops from Montreal to a rendezvous at Point aux Trembles. The combined force, in which were James Clinton and some of his Yorkers, numbered only nine hundred effectives. They tried siege operations, but their cannon were too light; smallpox and bitter cold took daily toll. Carleton's strategy of delay insured that with every day the invaders would grow weaker. An assault might win; the siege was hopeless. At two o'clock in the morning of the 31st of December, Montgomery led the Yorkers toward the battery under Cape Diamond. The battery let go its fire at short range. General Mont-

gomery fell, mortally wounded, with many others. Clinton retreated with the survivors. Arnold's attempt on the city itself gained an initial success, but this, too, resulted in heavy loss. A vigorous counter-offensive might have destroyed the American army completely; but Carleton, a kindly, politic man more desirous of breaking colonial morale than colonial heads, preferred to let winter work havoc in the besiegers' ranks.

At one time James Clinton seems to have been the senior American officer on duty. In the "Journal of an Officer of the Garrison," printed as a footnote in William Smith's *History of Canada*, appears this entry as of February 24. 1776:

Last night a deserter from the rebels was drawn up by ropes at Port Louis. He reports that General Clinton commands and that he has a reinforcement of 400 men from Montreal.

On May 6, having received its first reënforcement, the garrison drove the besiegers away in a complete rout. The invaders of Canada, many of them in sore plight, made for home via Montreal. Carleton issued a proclamation to the Canadians to treat the broken-spirited, retreating men kindly.

The failure of this, the first American offensive, graved itself indelibly upon the officers who survived, many of whom later acquired renown as dependable wheel-horses of the Revolution. Ever after they thought less of dash than of solid preparation for victory. They

were brave enough, but they did not expect the impossible to happen. Clinton, at least, learned in Canada the need for caution and the need for training troops so that doors which did not fly open on demand could be battered down. We shall see him, often enough hereafter, delaying a move, to the impatience of his superiors, until his preparations are complete, until enough compressed force is behind his blow to make it irresistible.

On August 9, 1776, the fortieth anniversary of Clinton's birth, Washington made him a brigadier general, in succession to his dead chief, Richard Montgomery. A stern test of his character occurred when his younger brother, George, became his superior officer. George, truly enough, was a notable leader of men, a fountain of energy and inspiration, an indomitable patriot. He could rally the people, call out the militia, raise the sinking spirits of a neighborhood, as the more grim, self-contained James never could have done. Yet George was no such soldier as James, either by training or nature, and his commission was dated nine months later than James'. Giving George precedence in the Highlands of the Hudson was merely a political play. He was governor, and extremely popular; hence he was appointed. This reversal of the order of nature and military merit was accepted by the elder brother without the slightest murmur, not a shred of evidence indicates that he considered himself slighted

or demeaned. The letters which passed between the two men reveal tender affection and complete confidence.

Under George, James Clinton busied himself getting the defenses of the Hudson in order. It was, indeed, high time. Then, as now, the Hudson Valley, with one hundred and fifty miles of navigable water running north and south, presented a major problem in national defense. If the British could control the Hudson from New York to Albany, they would split the colonies in two and win the war. Burgoyne saw this clearly and presented it convincingly in the plan for his drive from Canada which was blocked at Saratoga. But this river-way into the heart of America, provided by Nature, also had been made defensible by Nature. Some forty miles north of the Battery stand the rocky hills known as the Highlands of the Hudson, crowding close to the river on each bank. There, if the defenses of New York City fail in a future war, Americans will rally to defend the easy water-level approach to the interior. It is not by accident that the chief camp of the New York State National Guard is located at Peekskill or that one of the best national highways, U. S. 6, stretches from the Great Lakes to the Highlands, with a branch giving easy approach to West Point, an army post as well as the site of the United States Military Academy. To defend the Highlands of the Hudson is to defend mid-America.

The first defensive work built there was Fort Constitution on the island opposite West Point; but because Peekskill had advantages as a crossing place for New England troops, it was decided to place the chief works across the river and north of that town. Peekskill would have to be garrisoned in any event; by this arrangement the garrisons of the forts and the town would be able to support one another. Accordingly two forts were reared on the west bank of the Hudson, one north of the Poplopen's Kill and one south of it. The best site of all, West Point, was overlooked until misfortune came to the more southerly defenses. Probably it was a blunder to build on Poplopen's Kill; the concentration near Peekskill was decided upon hurriedly and the forts built hurriedly.

No doubt they were badly built, the army being short of engineer officers, short of money, short of time. But they looked formidable; in a sense they covered the Peekskill crossing, and they commanded the approaches to the great iron chain which stretched across the Hudson to discourage the British from running past the forts into the upper reaches of the river. As far as sea power went the British could sweep the Hudson whenever they chose; had they used their sea power promptly, intelligently, they might have saved Burgoyne.

In the summer of 1777, when Burgoyne was moving leisurely down the waterways into northern New York,



GENERAL AND MRS. JAMES CLINTON

From medallion portraits in the *St. Mein Collection of Portraits*, published by Elias Dexter, New York City, 1862. St. Mein dates the General's portrait in 1797, and Mrs. Clinton's in 1798. The General is shown in his sixty-first year.



Governor Clinton commanded Fort Montgomery, on the north side of the Poplopen, and James Clinton, after a summer tour of frontier duty at Ramapo, was brought back to Fort Clinton. Both were under Major General Israel Putnam, "Old Put," at Peekskill. Little by little Old Put's garrisons had been thinned to reënforce Washington to the southward and Gates to the northward. When the test came, as Sir Henry Clinton made his belated move to relieve the pressure on Burgoyne, the defenders of all three of the Highland garrisons numbered only about a thousand Continentals and four hundred militia, not well armed and considered ineffective. The letters of both Clinton brothers, the long, graceful letters of George and the short, terse letters of James, emphasize the lack of men, lack of arms, lack of shoes and lack of ammunition. James wrote to the Provincial Congress from Fort Montgomery on December 11, 1776:

I have but a small garrison here at present, consisting of five companies of my regiment (except the artillery) and many of them without shoes and other necessary clothes. They have received no pay since the first of August last, and if they had money, there is no clothing nor shoes to be purchased here; the chief of Captain Swartwout's company insist that their times were out the first of this instant, and their officers acknowledge it to be so; five of his company went off this morning without leave, almost barefooted. I have sent a party after them, but if they are taken they will be of no service here. . . . I wish there could be some shoes and stockings sent here

for the men, the value of them should be stopped out of their wages.

By spring the lack of clothing had been somewhat corrected, but Clinton reports in March that he is uneasy at the shortage of men.

Conditions at the forts were little better when, nearly seven months later, Highlands history began to be made by a third Clinton, kinsman of our brigadiers. The connection emphasizes the cousinly character of this war. Sir Henry Clinton was the son of George Clinton, royal governor of New York twenty-five years before. The father of our brigadiers, the pioneer of Little Britain, had called upon the royal governor; probably showed him the signet ring bearing the Lincoln arms, and told him that his youngest son also was named George Clinton. As a son of the sixth Earl of Lincoln, the royal governor would recognize the ring as evidence of cousinship, distant but unmistakable. Now the sons of these calm visitors, cousins another generation removed, were joining battle as responsible commanders. The royal governor, a sprightly, talkative man, especially in his cups, may have told his gallant soldier son of this ancient signet ring, bearing the Lincoln arms in the heart of rude America. Sir Henry may have recalled something of it as he sailed upstream to tackle his cousins and "Old Put"; he may even have traced its mark on a letter referring to exchange of prisoners.

Sir Henry will puzzle historians as long as American history is written. Nickerson, in his admirable *Turning Point of the Revolution* calls him "the best of the British commanders in America throughout the Revolution." It is true that he was more vigorous than Howe and steadier than Burgoyne. Yet, clean and capable as he was, he helped to lose two beleaguered British armies by failing to go to their relief. Burgoyne called on Clinton for aid, and Cornwallis called on Clinton for aid, which neither received. Their dispatches were perhaps not quite frank to the point of saying that without his aid they must surrender; although in the case of Cornwallis, a study of the map would make it clear that retreat was impossible. The message which Clinton received from Burgoyne on his way up the Hudson showed the deep seriousness of the latter's plight; five thousand men opposed by twelve thousand and more rebels somewhere in his rear. Still, Burgoyne thought he could advance or retreat; if he did not hear from Clinton by October 12 he would consider himself free to retreat. It was hardly a candid message, but Clinton knew Burgoyne and might have made allowances for his overweening pride. "Gentleman Johnny" hated to say that he was in a tight box. So all that Henry Clinton felt that he could offer was a demonstration in force on the Hudson to relieve pressure on Burgoyne. His correspondence shows that he once thought of the move as a "desperate attempt

in a desperate situation"; but, when his side of the equation proved easy of solution, he forgot the desperation at Burgoyne's end. Moving efficiently according to plan, he did not strain himself to leap beyond his plan. In fact, straining himself in action was not his forte, though he was diligent in the formal, paper work of military administration. The lack which led Henry Clinton to assist his foes in the capture of two armies was no want of courage or competence, but simply want of imagination. Until too late, Henry Clinton could not comprehend the predicaments of Burgoyne in 1777 and Cornwallis in 1781, for the reason that he himself would never have permitted an army of his to get into a like predicament. In a sense he was the best British general in America, but by and large no foe contributed more to the cause of American independence. All this time he was fighting against recurrent blindness. On July 28, 1781, he wrote, "Almost blind, I employ a friend's hand."

However, as far as Henry Clinton let himself go in this drive on the Highlands, he was superb. He took three thousand men north with him, leaving five thousand in New York City. Twice he fainted at Peekskill, landing troops and completely outwitting "Old Put." Early on October 6, 1777, he put his two thousand best troops across the river and marched them from Stony Point inland by way of the Timp, a high pass through the hills, one of these places where a corporal's guard

might stop an army. But there was no corporal's guard there that foggy morning, since it was reckoned too difficult a climb for troops. The British column divided, the left to attack Fort Montgomery, the right, led by Sir Henry, to attack Fort Clinton.

Henry Clinton outside Fort Clinton with a thousand excellent men-at-arms; James Clinton inside with perhaps three hundred ill-found followers. For this had Norse Clints sailed to France, Norman Clintons fought at Hastings, appropriated English soil, risked their necks for kings, crossed the ocean, the breed surviving the desperate risks of eight valiant centuries—that Clintons might smash each other beside a crag on the Hudson? The Fates who tangle the skeins of lives must have smiled at their handiwork that autumn morning.

Henry Clinton summoned his cousins to surrender. No; they would defend their poor forts. If they had surrendered, no doubt he would have been ashamed of them. The assaults on both forts began about five o'clock in the afternoon. Fort Montgomery was the first to fall. George Clinton made his escape in a boat. Some of his men were bayoneted without mercy, but at Fort Clinton, where Henry Clinton bagged the game, the lives of all who surrendered were spared. James Clinton fought to the end and then escaped into the woods, with a bayonet wound in the flesh of his thigh. An orderly book in his breeches pocket saved

him from a worse wound, capture and possibly death. He hurried to Little Britain, to rally his militia around the survivors who had followed him. Indomitable Governor George called out every man between sixteen and sixty; Burgoyne must still be headed off.

As for Henry Clinton, he broke the Hudson chain, sent Vaughan to show Kingston what the capital of a rebel state might expect, and went back to New York. Ten days later Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga. Henry Clinton had wasted a deal of good soldiering on a hollow victory, when he might have saved Burgoyne's army by pushing forward and calling on his reserves to follow.

Their Highland forts burned to the ground, James and George counseled together on replacements. Washington and Congress looked to them to keep the Highland rampart safe. Radière, the French engineer, still contended for the Fort Clinton site, but after consultation with Putnam, the two Clintons threw their weight to West Point, and the Council and Assembly of New York, which held the purse strings, followed their advice. The final decision was taken on January 13, 1778. Work was pushed rapidly, and the fort soon in shape to receive the enemy. Quiet prevailed on the Hudson that summer, but in the Indian country to the west the Iroquois were on the warpath.

James Clinton now reappears in an old rôle, to which

he had been inured in boyhood—that of Indian fighter. He was assigned command of the Minisink-Shawangunk frontier, perhaps a hundred miles in length, with headquarters at the old town of Rochester, not the modern city by Lake Ontario. At the outset he had two of the New York line regiments with him, and later three, the fourth being assigned to Fort Schuyler, old Fort Stanwix. The gaps in his line were filled in with militia. James Clinton's excellent service on that difficult assignment commended him to Washington as the ideal New York commander to coöperate in the forthcoming effort to rid New York and the northern Pennsylvania frontier of the new state, once for all, of the Indian menace.

Of the Six Nations only one, the Oneidas, held aloof from the British cause. Led by the Johnsons, Butlers and Joseph Brant, the red warriors and their Tory helpers had ravaged the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania, and on November 13, 1778, put the Cherry Valley settlement to fire and sword. When that dread news came in, James Clinton was rushed to Albany to prepare the American revenge.

He arrived there just in time to receive the refugees from Cherry Valley,—“31 killed and Barbarous massacred; 33 Prisoners carried off; 38 made prisoners and permitted to return.” The victims needing relief numbered 173 from Cherry Valley, and more from German Flats. Governor Clinton put the whole matter of re-

lief in the hands of his brother and General Philip Schuyler.

Into James Clinton's hand came soon a letter from Walter N. Butler, the Tory chief, broaching the matter of exchange of prisoners, his mother being detained. It is difficult to assay Butler's responsibility for the deaths at Cherry Valley; the return of thirty-eight prisoners unharmed and his willingness to exchange the others, is direct testimony in his favor. But Clinton thought him blameworthy, and in reply read Butler a sharp lecture on the responsibility of British officers in command of Indians, the sincerity of which is proved by Clinton's proved dislike for employing Indians in warfare, even on scouting duty.

These Tory-Indian raids on the western frontier reduced the supplies available for the armies; and the horrors of frontier tragedies reacted depressingly on the morale of both troops and non-combatants. Something more than military advantage, however, may have been in Washington's mind as he planned the expedition of 1779 to the Indian country on a scale so large that it amounted to a triumphant march. From the time he crossed the mountains to Venango in 1753, the possibilities of western expansion rarely left his mind. He was an early mover in the Ohio Company, he knew good land when he saw it, and soon after Yorktown he began to calculate how to bring the trade of the West down the Potomac. Moreover, there was the future of the country to consider. Would this long

war be entirely worth while if victory left America only a thin fringe along the Atlantic, while Britain continued to hold the hinterland? Hardly. But, if the young Republic established a right of conquest over the most active Indian allies of the British Crown, that would be something worth talking about in a peace conference, the more so because these Iroquois claimed sovereign rights over territories far beyond their habitations. They were overlords of the Delawares of Pennsylvania and the Shawnees of the Ohio; in 1768 the British government itself had recognized their claim, of a sort, to all of Kentucky and Tennessee inside the Great Bend of the Tennessee. Conquer the Iroquois, and the United States might emerge from the conflict a continental power. Also, the half-starved soldiery would see land ahead if they won. Americans were ever land hungry, and the rank and file would certainly expect something substantial in case of victory. What is easier to give away than land gained by conquest?

Whatever may have been in the back of the commander-in-chief's mind, his instructions were a bit hazy except one point, where he was definite to the point of using italics:

Parties should be detached to lay waste all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most efficient manner, that the country may not be merely *over-run*, but *destroyed*.—Instructions to Sullivan, May 31, 1779.

There were three plans for this campaign—a drive through Pennsylvania, a drive through New York, and a combination of the two. The latter won; it had the merit of easy mobilization in peaceful country at the outset, and strong concentration for the real work in enemy country. Major General John Sullivan was to lead the larger force through Pennsylvania to Tioga Point, meeting there James Clinton, who would take a smaller force up the Mohawk to Canajoharie and down the Susquehanna to the rendezvous. It was a pretty plan, and it worked amazingly well, because the personnel had been picked with an eye single to success. The job, being far afield, did not commend itself to the limelight-hunters who bothered the Commander-in-Chief for conspicuous assignments; and as a result, Sullivan's brigadiers were solid, businesslike soldiers—Clinton of New York, Poor of New Hampshire, Hand of Pennsylvania and Maxwell of New Jersey.

Their commands, too, had been shaken down by this time into dependable units. The dancing days of the Revolution were done; those who thought independence could be won in a trice had either been killed or had deserted or had left the colors in disgust. Those who remained had learned the fundamentals of their trade. Service of supply had improved, and with it the temper of the troops. This expedition, at least, was well found in all essentials.

The New York continental line consisted of five

regiments, under the following regimental commanders—Goose Van Schaick, Philip Van Cortlandt, Peter Gansevoort, Frederick Weissenfels in succession to Henry Beekman Livingston, and Lewis Dubois. The 1st regiment under Van Schaick could not be spared from duty at Fort Schuyler, old Fort Stanwix, while the 2d (Cortlandt's) would not join the brigade until the junction with Sullivan. The other three regiments mobilized at Canajoharie in June, and were met there by Colonel William Butler's 4th Pennsylvania regiment, sometimes called Butler's Rangers. To a man they were experienced Indian fighters. It was Butler who burned Oquaga, the finest Indian town in New York, in revenge for which the foe had staged the Cherry Valley attack. The four regiments numbered about 2,000, the largest force Clinton had yet commanded in the field.

On June 13, 1779, just before leaving for the Indian country, General Clinton wrote his wife a letter which reflects accurately the serene love of this stern man for his Mary. He tells her that he sent his regiment off, rode with them to Schenectady and then returned to Albany to buy some presents for her and the family, and to make his will.

I send you a list of what things I take with me, what I leave in Albany, and what I send you, which I hope you will receive safe as they are now of great value. . . . I spared no pains to procure them, though I had but little

time. . . . I have done the best I could for all of you, and if I had not, I would be ungrateful, for you have done everything in your Power to serve me.

I have made my Will . . . but I wanted you to consult with . . . I hope it will please you, as I assure you it was my study.

The next letter to Mrs. Clinton is equally revealing, though somewhat sanguinary. He writes from the camp at the south end of Otsego Lake on July 6, reporting that since July 1 all the regiments and stores have been moved thither from Canajoharie "without a single accident," in spite of a twenty-mile carry over a "Road exceeding bad." He has 208 bateaux on the lake. His men number 2,000, including twenty-five Oneida scouts; all hands healthy and in high spirits. He then narrates to the gentle Mary, with some detail, the arrest, trial and execution of two Tories, Lieutenant Hare and Sergeant Newberry, out with sixty-three Indians and two other whites "to take prisoners or Sculps." It was probably a nice point whether, at the moment of arrest, they were spies or combatants, but a general court-martial sentenced both to be hanged as spies. First to last, James Clinton could hang a Tory without turning a hair; it was all part of the day's work to him, but the bitterness of the times is revealed in his passing the details on as big news for domestic consumption.

In this pleasant camp, on land once owned by George

Croghan and destined to be owned and celebrated by James Fenimore Cooper, the expedition waited long for orders, so long that the August drought created a difficult situation which Clinton met by an ingenious engineering feat. The Susquehanna leaves its source, Otsego Lake, in a narrow channel, then very low and somewhat choked by driftwood. The surveyor-commander planned and put through the construction of a dam which raised the level of the lake three feet. Then, with more than two hundred bateaux in alignment, he ordered the dam broken and swept downstream safely on the high tide. The remainder of the force, with the cattle and horses, proceeded along the heavily wooded banks, but with such astute precautions that the enemies roving the vicinity failed to collect a single scalp. At Union, in Broome county, Clinton met Poor, who had been mopping up Indian villages, in accordance with Washington's blanket order to destroy. While waiting, Sullivan had built Fort Sullivan at Tioga Point; there the northern and southern wings of his army united on August 22.

Clinton's independent command was now at an end, Major General John Sullivan taking over supreme responsibility. Sullivan is one of the Revolution's choicest characters for a biographer. Like Ethan Allen he delighted in playing with ideas. At officer's mess in the wilderness, he would discourse on deism, letting his lightning intelligence play wittily over a wide range

of thought and fancy. One can imagine the stolid, businesslike Clinton sitting there in silence, a little dazzled by the talk, but wondering if the good old Presbyterian God of his fathers would not strike them with disaster as a reward for such levity in the face of danger. Nevertheless Sullivan proved himself a good soldier on this job, though unfortunate elsewhere.

The expedition, soon under way, came to grips with John Butler's Tories and Brant's Indians at Newtown, five miles below the present city of Elmira, on August 29. Strongly posted, the enemy made a hot six-hour fight of it, but was completely routed by the far more numerous Continentals. Washington's forethought in preparing an overwhelming offensive so thoroughly justified itself that never again in this campaign did Butler and Brant risk a stand.

Nevertheless, this contest at Newtown had its moment of dire peril. Brant, the Mohawk strategist, caused his works to be evacuated early in the contest, and concentrated against a single regiment, Reid's of Poor's brigade, in greatly superior numbers. So adroitly did the enemy execute this movement that the change was not discovered until he had Reid outflanked. Dearborn was ahead of Reid and out of touch with him, but he promptly brought his regiment about face, and came to Reid's assistance. At the same time Clinton put two of his regiments through to the danger spot on a left oblique. After a sharp contest at this point the

enemy began a retreat which seems to have been well timed and conducted, escaping the net spread for him. It is noteworthy that the maneuvers by which succor came to Reid so promptly could hardly have been executed in the heat of battle by raw, undisciplined troops. The American army, after four years of warfare, was finding itself at last.

The rest of the expedition is largely a tour in local history. There were attempted ambushes of the sort which defeated Braddock in '55 and St. Clair in '91, but this seasoned American army could not be caught napping. The worst setback was the loss of Lieutenant Boyd and seventeen men in the Groveland ambush, sent to reconnoitre an Indian town. For the most part the army proceeded systematically on its way, burning crops and villages. On the 14th of September it destroyed the abandoned Seneca stronghold, Genesee Castle, home of the most troublesome members of the Seneca nation. William Butler and Dearborn raided as far as Lake Cayuga and Colonel Gansevoort was detached with one hundred men to try the short route to Fort Stanwix. The bulk of the army struck out for Newtown, arriving at Fort Reid on September 24, where it found the garrison and provisions for the return trip all safe. Proceeding with what seems undue leisure, the column reached Easton on the 15th of October, where the army demobilized, Clinton leading his brigade back to its home state.

Despite the immense destruction, the Iroquois kept fighting. Washington's hope that a crushing defeat might bring them to the point of discussing peace failed to materialize. Raids continued; the next year John Johnson swept through the Schoharie and the Mohawk, and Haldimand made good his threat to do unto the Oneidas as Sullivan had done to the Senecas. Among the western nations, the young Republic acquired a reputation which poisoned Indian relations in the Middle West for a generation. Within fifty years the nation progressed morally to the point of deprecating the expedition's wholesale destruction. Of late years the effort has been made to justify those measures as necessary and the results as valuable; but to my mind the whole expedition was a waste of time and money, except in so far as it demonstrated that the colonies could dominate the Northwest Territory at will, and hence they received that vast tract at the peace conference. My chief interest in the campaign is as a military movement efficiently executed, in which a number of excellent soldiers prepared themselves to end the Revolution with a well-timed and perfectly executed victory at Yorktown.

Clinton returned to the posts near his home. In October, 1780, after the treason of Arnold, Washington wrote to Clinton at West Point:

As it is necessary there should be an officer in whom the State has confidence to take the general direction of

affairs at Albany, and on the frontier, I have fixed upon you for this purpose, and request you will proceed to Albany without delay and assume the command.

A strong hand was needed in Albany because another enemy drive from Canada seemed to be in preparation, and because the Tories in that area had become extremely active. Against the latter Clinton proceeded with the utmost rigor. Himself a single-minded, one-cause man, who never lifted finger from the Revolutionary plow once he had put his hand to it, he could find few excuses for leniency toward Tories. He threw his whole weight back of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, as is shown by their published minutes. We find him quartering troops in Loyalist areas. At his suggestion, the disaffected inhabitants of Ballston were removed "to the interior parts of this country," a proceeding inevitably attended by a good deal of misery for the banished. The Tories, indeed, had grown astonishingly bold in the Albany sector. In August, 1781, they made a raid on the Schuyler mansion, close to Albany, in an attempt to seize the General; to this day can be seen a tomahawk dent, said to have been made in that foray, on the rail of the grand staircase. But occasionally this stern man proves that he is moved by justice and military need rather than a mania to revenge and persecute. We find him asking the Commissioners to admit a prisoner to bail, and endeavoring to exchange Dr. George Smith, an

active Tory then in the toils but a man of sense and honest purpose withal. But bigger things were in the air.

If the Revolution were to succeed, obviously the campaign of 1781 must produce something better than a stalemate. The French could not be expected to maintain an army in America indefinitely; already the strain was telling on the French treasury. Washington voiced his recognition of the crucial character of this campaign in warning governors and commanders that garrisons of Continental troops must be reduced in number and the remainder thinned down, leaving the work of frontier defense largely to the militia levies. At last he rid himself of the bogey of a second advance in force from Canada, which had held immobile some of his best troops. He wrote Clinton at Albany emphatically on that subject, and recalled him to the Highlands in August, where New York troops of the line became part of the concentration intended for the long-deferred attack on New York City.

All summer the Commander-in-Chief had been planning to capture that port with the help of the French navy. The beautifully equipped French army at last moved over to the Hudson; and the merger gave Washington a striking force of 12,000 to 15,000 men. In spite of Cornwallis' misfortunes, the division of British land forces between New York and Virginia need cause the British little concern as long as they domi-





nated the intervening waters. However, the instant they lost control of the sea, they would be in extreme danger in one sector or the other, perhaps in both.

Summer wore away while Rochambeau and Washington awaited the arrival of the promised French fleet under De Grasse. At length the latter surprised them, as well as the enemy, by sailing for the Chesapeake. Six days after the message giving his destination arrived at Newport, Washington's army began the march to Virginia which decided the war. At the outset Washington kept the defenders of New York mystified; by the time Sir Henry Clinton understood the situation it was beyond remedy. British sailors still had the opportunity to save Cornwallis, but for once they failed, the weather assisting their foes.

James Clinton commanded the head of that column on that great advance of five hundred miles. He reached Philadelphia, August 30, and Baltimore, September 8, amid illuminations and tremendous cheering. From the head of navigation on the Elk River, present Elkton, his troops were ferried in barges and ships the length of Chesapeake Bay to Williamsburgh, Virginia. On the 22d Clinton led his division toward Yorktown.

Those were Clinton's halcyon days. Washington conferred upon this veteran brigadier high and unique honor, by giving him the command of a division. The other division commanders were all major generals. Clinton's was the 3d division of the right wing; his

equals in responsibility on that wing were Major General Lafayette and Major General Steuben, the entire wing being commanded by Major General Benjamin Lincoln. On either wing Clinton was the only officer of his rank to command a division.

Because of this step-up, command of the New York brigade under Clinton fell upon the able colonel of the 1st New York, Goose Van Schaick, who yielded command of the regiment to his lieutenant colonel, Cornelius Van Dyck. Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt led his 2d regiment.

Clinton's 2d brigade was composed of three regiments from other states—the 1st New Jersey under Colonel Matthias Ogden, the 2d New Jersey under Lieutenant Colonel Francis Barber and the Rhode Island infantry under Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Jeremiah Olney, with Colonel Elias Dayton of New Jersey as brigade commander. In an army usually overstocked with general officers, this alignment can be accepted as evidence of Washington's confidence in Clinton's ability and his judgment to pick brigade commanders from his colonels.

A further honor came when the New York brigade was selected to receive the captured colors. Twenty-eight British captains, each carrying his regimental colors, cased, stood in alignment opposite twenty-eight New York sergeants, under command of Ensign Robert Wilson, the youngest commissioned officer in the army,

then only eighteen years of age. At his order the captains, one by one, delivered their burdens. Certain of those regiments had never lost their colors before and have never lost them since.

The siege of Yorktown, oft retold, need not detain us here. I have stressed the details of Clinton's record in that campaign, and the honors shown him both before and after the battle, to explain the natural chagrin he felt at not being advanced in rank. Faultlessly he had done a major general's work in a campaign of such import that its chief actors seemed to deserve reward, yet he was passed over by Congress. Worse yet, he was given no assignment to duty on his return; the old campaigner, at the height of his powers, felt that he was being shelved. He writes:

At an early period of the war I entered into the service of my country, and I have continued in it during all the vicissitudes of fortune, and am conscious that I have exerted my best endeavors to serve it with fidelity. I have never sought emolument or promotion, and as the different commands I have held were unsolicited, I might have reasonably expected, if my services were no longer wanted, to have been indulged at least with a decent dismissal.

The records of the Continental Congress show that his name was proposed for advancement several times after the Battle of Yorktown, both singly and in groups, but always failed of favor. There could be no doubt of his capacity, no criticism of his record. Reading between

the lines of the minutes one sees that a nasty quarrel had developed between representatives of the various colonies over promotions to major generalships. Past masters in the art of logrolling, the delegates from each colony looked on promotions as rewards for their neighbors. In one group, which included Clinton, Moultrie and McIntosh, only Knox, the artillery officer, passed the gauntlet of that cynical Congress. Victory at Yorktown broke the military tension, whereupon political tension increased. Already the line of party cleavage was beginning to show, and it is probable that the rising political power of George Clinton made his brother a target for small minds.

However, James did not resign. He stuck to the end of the war, attended his brother's famous dinner to Washington at Fraunces' Tavern, New York, and heard the chief's touching farewell toast to his officers. No commander ever had a more loyal follower than Washington had in James Clinton.

In after years the myth grew that a major generalship had come his way after all. His distinguished but sometimes inaccurate son, De Witt, baldly states his father was so honored, but I find no trace of it. Brigadier general from 1776 to 1783—that's James Clinton all over.

The rest is little enough. Before the war James acted as surveyor for the agents of New York in determining the New Jersey-New York boundary; after the war he

was one of the commissioners who settled the New York-Pennsylvania boundary. As a member of the New York State Convention, he considered the Constitution of the United States. Because the document contained no Bill of Rights, he voted against acceptance, a loyal ally of his brother. Ardently attached to liberty, plain folk from a plain setting, the Clintons feared bigness, concentration of authority, and centralized government. Jeffersonians, only more so. They believed small sovereignties more conducive to human happiness than large ones. There is still a chance they were right.

Habit of command and a dignified reticence sat strongly on James to the end. Genial George remained mellow and talkative until death, which arrived when he was Vice-President, April 20, 1812. He would pat a new senator on the back and narrate Clinton adventures until the senator lost all respect for age. But Brother James feinted silently with the one unconquerable adversary. After George died there was nothing left for James to live for; he passed away eight months later, December 22, 1812, in his seventy-seventh year.

His life covered the span of four wars, two with France and two with Great Britain. In two of these wars he fought, learning his trade in one, demonstrating its art in the other. He had marched with the British against the French and with the French against the British; but he never liked or hated either French or British. His love he kept for America and his hate

for those Americans who set their hands and hearts against the rise of America to independence among nations. A cool, dispassionate soldier, a "happy warrior" who, amid suspicion and dissension, never doubted his chief or his cause!

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ELKANAH WATSON



## ELKANAH WATSON

EVERY ten years, when census returns are announced, the name of Elkanah Watson rises like a wraith out of the past, flits through editorial columns and then disappears for another decade. The eventful life of this energetic prophet, his remarkable adventures and services, are all but forgotten, and such fame as remains to him results from a single mathematical exercise in 1790, in which he computed the probable increase of population in America. Without reference to wholesale immigration, the steamboat being as yet beyond the horizon, he estimated there would be 133,000,000 Americans in 1930. Struck it rather close, too; within 11,000,000 of the actual count. So Elkanah is frequently drawn upon to show that immigration has increased population only slightly, that in essence every immigrant has somehow kept an American from being born or has assisted, through economic pressure, to kill an American early.

Elkanah lived through four more censuses after that of 1790, and long before his death this ten-year wonder at his astuteness had become a feature of the American press. A many-sided man, he must have marveled at the ease with which his public forgot so much in its will-

ingness to celebrate so little. His mind, it is true, ran to prophecy to an extent which no doubt hampered him as a business man. Only recently have we come to the point of paying honor, as well as profits, to the seer in business, of which breed Elkanah was one of the first to rise in America. His friend and youthful inspiration, Franklin, has been called "the first of the moderns," but it remained for Watson to multiply, expand and emphasize the philosophy of "Poor Richard," to urge and prosecute the conquering of space and nature through science, to promote the organized attack on natural resources which has become the mainspring of American life.

In this point of view, as in many of its practical applications, he was a man ahead of his times—that is why he failed, not of fame in his lifetime, but of a following equal to his parts. No doubt he seemed a visionary to his contemporaries, who simply could not accept his high-striding cocksureness. His was a fumbling age, more in need of stability than of progress. Amid the break-up of old institutions, a search was in progress for the ideals and adjustments on which new institutions might be solidified. The great need was to establish the United States politically, before marching on its hidden wealth. Statesmen were the first need; preferably, statesmen with war records. Watson, by a freak of fortune, had never faced the redcoat foe, so he had no chance for political preferment. Moreover, he was

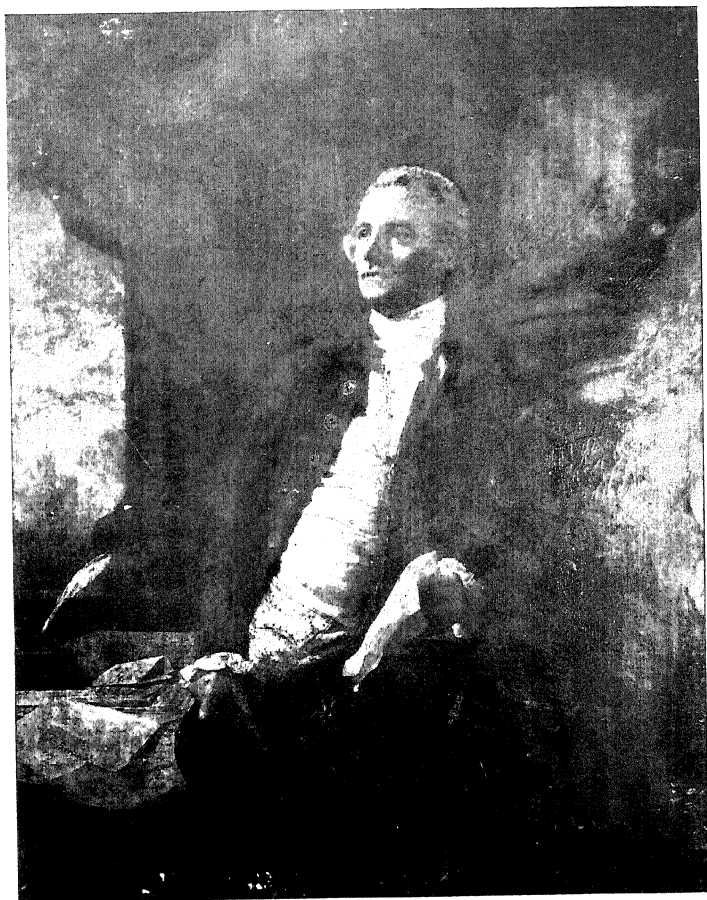
a man of the world who had traveled widely on the Continent and knew foreign languages; the raw democracy of his day revolted against such refinements. But, more fundamentally, he was out of tune with his contemporaries because his leaping imagination led him to take the stability of the United States for granted while yet its politics were wildly fluid. For instance, he would have built a canal through New York State before the British were out of Michigan. The saving combination of ignorance and timidity which is called common sense kept Mr. Watson firmly in his place. That he endured this repression without souring, and found noble outlets for his terrific energy, while all around him smaller men were being hoisted into places of power, proves his quality even at this distance.

Fortunately this intensely busy man left behind him an extensive record of his deeds and thoughts. He published three short books, and in his later years undertook a complete summary of his extensive journals, which was completed after Elkanah's death by his son, Winslow C. Watson, and published in 1856. It is still a valid source book of Revolutionary history, and a picturesque record of social conditions here and abroad, but the original journals far surpass it in interest. The summary of these documents, however, *Men and Times of the Revolution or the Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, including journals of Travels in Europe and America from 1777-1842*, contains a deal of his correspondence

with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Elbridge Gerry, Albert Gallatin and other historic figures.

Elkanah Watson was of Pilgrim stock, born, as he says, "within rifle-shot of that consecrated rock, where, in New England, the first European foot was pressed." Pilgrim blood ran in his veins, as he was sixth in descent, on his mother's side, from Edward Winslow, third governor of Plymouth colony. There he attended the village school until his fourteenth year, being taught by two men destined to become noted Revolutionary soldiers, Peleg Wadsworth and Alexander Scammel, Adjutant General under Washington, who fell near Yorktown. His boyhood covered years of strain and ferment in rebellious Massachusetts; under his Whig schoolmasters young Elkanah became the complete hobbledehoy rebel. The Watsons were all of that persuasion, it seems, but some of his Winslow relations remained Tory, sacrificed their properties through loyalty to the King, and ended their days in New Brunswick.

A few generations earlier the Watsons had been the richest family in Plymouth, but now they were less well off than the Winslows; hence we find Elkanah in September, 1773, marching off to work at fifteen, bound out to John Brown, merchant and banker of Providence, Rhode Island, whose family name is borne by Brown University. In the preceding summer Mr. Brown had distinguished himself in the patriot cause by helping to



### ELKANAH WATSON

From a painting by John Singleton Copley, R.A. Done in London, 1782, when Watson was twenty-four years of age. Now in the possession of Mrs. Frank Larkin of Ossining, N. Y., a great-granddaughter. Eventually to go to Princeton University.



burn the British sloop, *Gaspee*, in Narragansett Bay. Already a man marked for ruin if the British triumphed, Brown was a master whom an impressionable boy could take pride in serving. Elkanah enrolled in Colonel Nightingale's cadet company and marched about in a scarlet coat with yellow facings, a smallish private who came under the eye of Colonel Charles Lee as reviewing officer in 1774. After running bullets all night, this company marched out of Providence on April 20, 1775, toward Lexington. After six miles they turned around upon hearing the British had retreated to Cambridge, but this taste of war led Elkanah to apply to his father and his employer for release from his indentures so that he might join the besiegers of Boston. This refused, he stayed on at Providence—"most melancholy."

The boy a little later reached Washington's headquarters, however, as Brown's representative, with one and a half tons of gunpowder, and had the mighty satisfaction of delivering his papers into the hand of the Commander-in-Chief, who, at the moment, "was in act of admonishing a militia colonel with some animation." After the war, when Washington had become the national hero and Watson a traveled gentleman, Watson recalled the incident to the General at Mount Vernon. The lad effected final delivery of his powder at Mystic, where he found large stores of powder barrels filled with sand, "to deceive the enemy."

Ever afterward Watson advocated military prepared-

ness. Indeed, it may have been his association with John Brown which implanted in Elkanah Watson his habit of looking ahead. Foreseeing that powder would be scarce, Mr. Brown had ordered his sea captains to fill their surplus space with that commodity, issuing the orders long before the storm burst at Lexington. This service, and the continuing evidence that the Browns were fighting the war commercially, no doubt relieved the lad's melancholy at being denied a chance to wear his scarlet coat into action. A little later he had a chance to seize his musket, however, in a desperate effort to rescue his employer, who had been seized by a British vessel. Elkanah rode swiftly from Providence to Plymouth and roused the Committee of Safety. They sent some forty men to sea in two vessels, which cruised for ten days east of Cape Cod. Fortunately they failed to find their prey, for the Plymouth schooners were in no shape to fight, and Brown soon won his release. "Thus," says Elkanah, "it fell to my singular destiny, to sail from the place of my nativity, at the age of seventeen, in probably the first American vessel which opposed the British flag." Strange things were always happening to Elkanah Watson.

His next journey proved even more remarkable. There was little trade in Providence in 1777, because of the blockade, but America has a long seaboard, and the Browns, John and Nicholas, were not the men to sit idle in a decaying port. They roused young Watson

with an order to carry a large sum of money, about \$50,000, to South Carolina and Georgia, where it would be invested by their agents in cargoes for European ports. Burgoyne was bearing down on Albany; if New England were cut off from the other colonies, the Brown fortune was as good as gone; hence the inexperienced youth of nineteen really risked more than his employers. There were grave dangers to run through thousands of miles, what with Tories, bushwhackers and slaves in insurrection. Still, a rare adventure for an ardent youth like young Watson.

Elkanah set out on his thousand-mile ride September 4, 1777, with, as he says, "a good horse under me, a hanger at my side and a pair of pistols in my holster." The funds were sewed into his garment. At strange taverns, Elkanah slept in his precious clothes. To avoid the foe he took a wide swing around New York to Morristown, New Jersey, via Danbury and Peekskill. The good horse proved too much for Elkanah; at Morristown he forsook the saddle, hitched his animal to a sulky and went the rest of the way on wheels. At Burlington, New Jersey, the party—he now had two horsemen for companions—heard that Howe's dragoons were out. To outflank them, the travelers struck out for Bethlehem, via Cowles' Ferry, passing through a "wretched, new country" dotted with the occasional log huts of German frontiersmen. At Bethlehem they rested in a comfortable inn and had the hero Lafayette, re-

cuperating from wounds received at Brandywine, as a fellow guest.

From Bethlehem Elkanah drove his sulky through a fertile countryside already showing the marks of superior German husbandry. Even thus early he was more impressed by the works of man, in scenery, than by the works of God, by farms and peaceful valleys rather than by mountains and desolate wastes. But he was a little distressed at seeing women at work in the fields, "a custom most strange and repulsive to an inhabitant of New England." Well, the inhabitant of New England is on his way to see the world, and must learn to take its changes of pace and method lightly. Of the Dunkards at Euphrates, present Ephrata, he spoke slightly, but confessed being thrilled to the soul by their melodious chants at parting.

Through pleasant Lancaster, the "largest inland town in America with 6,000 inhabitants" and a busy arms factory, the party rode toward York, where the Continental Congress sat in session after running away from Philadelphia. Their sessions were in secret, so Elkanah tarried not after getting his passport. The travelers entered Maryland, October 5, passing through Hanover and Frederick into Virginia, finding the country back of Newland's Ferry "a wilderness region infested by a semi-barbarian population." Hereabouts he was shocked to see, "at a highly respectable house," young Negroes running about the place and even serv-

ing at table, "as naked as they came into the world." However, the Pilgrim traveler is learning urbanity, for he adds to this revelation of Ethiopian nakedness, "I find custom will reconcile us to almost everything."

Approaching Fredericksburg, Elkanah discovered the more cultured Virginia of the great plantations; and in that village of eight hundred inhabitants, he saw the mother of George Washington, a "majestic and venerable woman." Separating from his companions, Watson turned east toward Williamsburg, the colonial capital. In 1777 William and Mary College already had so many years back of it that Elkanah could describe it even then as "old." He records, also, a description of the first canal in America, from Richmond to Waltham—first mention of canals in a story which will be full of canals later.

In Williamsburg young Watson met a Captain Harwood, also for the South, and they set off together for the Carolinas, Harwood astride his horse, Watson in his sulky. They proceeded via Jamestown and Suffolk, making toward Edenton, North Carolina, on Albemarle Sound. Watson traversed Virginia without feeling impelled to see Richmond or Norfolk, now the chief cities of the Old Dominion, but then only two of a dozen small towns and eclipsed by some of the others.

Edenton was then booming, since it was safe from the enemy. Watson found it "nearly overrun by the busy sons of commerce." Came a delightful change from

steady travel by horse. Whenever possible they would proceed by water through the creeks and bayous of the deeply indented littoral, passengers in flatboats propelled by Negroes. The hospitable colonels, in their big plantation houses, took care of the travelers and passed them along from one to another. Harwood and Watson rode through pine woods rich in deer and turkey into Newbern, where, after a highly dangerous crossing of the Neuse River, they found all the taverns "full of French adventurers." All through the narrative of this journey are little touches indicating that Frenchmen were too plenty in America in 1777 to be well liked.

Elkanah carried food supplies in his sulky, but in the wilderness south of Wilmington they needed to run down a possum in order to dine. Presently they broke out of the woods on the firm beach of the Atlantic. There they met General McIntosh and his staff, the same Lachlan McIntosh who killed in a duel Button Gwinnett, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and hence curtailed Gwinnett's signature to a degree which collectors find highly satisfactory. The General gave our travelers the big news of Burgoyne's surrender. "All considered this glorious event as deciding the question of our eventual separation." Three cheers from all present!

The final descent upon Charleston was marked by one encounter which throws into relief the disordered state of the country, and lends point to the assertion

that in its early years the American Revolution was a social as well as a political upheaval. In the swamps near Wingan Bay our two travelers encountered fourteen naked Negroes, armed with staves, who disputed the way, shaking their rude weapons in menace. Our brave fellows, roaring in "thunderous voice," and pistols in hand, charged down upon the blacks, broke their line and chased them into the woods.

On the 18th of November, Watson reached Charleston. He ripped open his garments and delivered his funds. He had traveled 1,243 miles from Providence in seventy-seven days—average fifteen miles a day. The Brown consignee in Charleston, Mr. Russel, put himself about to give the young Northerner a view of Southern society, and Elkanah was enjoying himself immensely when Charleston caught fire. The conflagration, still called the "great fire" in those parts, raged for seventeen hours, destroying the larger part of the city. Elkanah's conduct in this emergency reveals the resourcefulness which marked his whole life. When someone rushed in to say that the house was on fire, he took his trunk on his back and started for the suburbs. There he entered a handsome house, locked his trunk in a closet, took the key and went back to fire-fighting. When he went for his trunk next day, he found he had picked out Governor Rutledge's mansion as his depository; but no one there would believe his story, as he was dirty and bloody from his labors and

injuries. Straightway he went forth, washed and cleaned himself, borrowed decent clothes and again applied for his property. This time the Governor received him with smiles and a friendly glass, saying: "My Secretary informed me that a person called for the trunk an hour or two ago, but not liking his appearance, declined to deliver it." Watson records the incident "to show the extreme importance of external appearances to a man's success in the world, and more particularly among strangers."

With two other New Englanders Watson decided to continue southward, more on pleasure than on business bent. Near the Ashepoo, Elkanah and his two companions met the intelligent Indian, Little Carpenter, chief of the Cherokees, on his way to Savannah "to brighten and strengthen the chain of union," as he said in excellent English. Watson's ability to meet all sorts of persons and pull information out of them is condensed in his report of the scene.

They were alternately whiffing out of a great wooden pipe, which was passed from one to the other. . . . I seated myself by the king, and took my whiff in turn, and finding him of a social cast, did not fail to ply him pretty closely with my Yankee questions.

Another talent of young Elkanah's appears in his account of a dance in a ferry house near Port Royal, where they stopped for the night. To add to the amusement, Elkanah out with his flute, and "playing some

jigs, set them to dancing, shuffling, and capering in merry style." To the end of his days, Elkanah Watson was a man of high spirits, always ready for a lark.

On Port Royal Island, Elkanah observed slaves laboriously picking seeds from cotton far into the night, a labor soon to pass with Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. Near Beaufort he encountered a rare example of Southern hospitality. They stopped at a house which they took to be a tavern, ordered dinner and wine with the traveler's usual freedom. All their wants were supplied without demur, but, when they sought to settle, their host informed them that he kept no tavern, adding that he was greatly obliged to them for their visit. Shamefaced, the trio departed while their host embarrassed them still more by insisting they should visit him upon their return.

Crossing the Savannah River at Zubley's Ferry, Elkanah ran into one of those scenes of sorrow which Howard Pyle has so well depicted in his picture, "The Tories." The owner of the ferry, Dr. Zubley, was a Swiss by birth, a noted preacher and leader in the colony, having represented Georgia at the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia three years before. He was ardent enough in the cause of American liberty, but drew the line at independence; therefore a decree of banishment had been passed against him, with confiscation of his estates. On the morrow he and his son would begin their pilgrimage toward exile. With lesser

folk as the actors for the most part, this sad scene was repeated over and over in all the American colonies during the Revolution. Burning patriot that he was, Elkanah felt naught but pity for this sore-afflicted victim of the times.

In Georgia Watson took careful notes on the culture of cotton, tea, indigo and mulberry trees set out for silkworms to feed upon. Passing south from Savannah, the party stopped with the Reverend Mr. Piercy, who had charge of the great orphan asylum begun, but never finished because of war operations, by the magnetic Whitefield, of whom Watson says:

He passed and repassed the Atlantic repeatedly, traversing the extent of the colonies like a flaming meteor, constantly soliciting charity . . . for this object, by the most energetic strains of his powerful eloquence, touching alike the heads and pockets of his delighted audiences.

Mr. Piercy convinced the three New Englanders that it was folly for them to enter Florida, then in British possession, and dotted with roving Indian bands. So at the Ogeechee, full fifteen hundred miles from Providence by horse, Elkanah faced about and started north. On the return journey, he had the entrée to more Southern homes, and never failed to marvel at their hospitality. Nevertheless, he notes the contrast between planter prosperity and slave misery, and registers, though in mild form as yet, the New England tendency toward abolition.

"In contemplating the wealth, and splendor, and

magnificence of the Southern planter, I cannot divest my mind that they are all produced by the blood and sweat of the slave." The spectacle of a slave family being torn apart by sale to different masters increased this antipathy to the institution of slavery.

At Charleston, the party was joined by one Captain Hussey, whose adventures so intrigued Elkanah that he gives them in detail. It seems that the Captain, a man of wit and of the world, could not cope with Nature. Hussey would get himself lost and fight wolves all night, he would examine dead snakes which came swiftly to life at the touch of his riding crop; he provided that element of comic relief which every expedition needs to keep its spirits up. Poor Hussey was drowned at sea off the coast of France some years later, no doubt in ludicrous circumstances.

On the homeward march the party, after leaving Georgetown for Baltimore, lost itself in the jungle which covered the present site of Washington. After viewing Baltimore, Watson records his opinion that the race for commercial supremacy in the Chesapeake Bay country would lie between Baltimore and Alexandria, with the odds favoring the latter because of its superior location. But Elkanah reckoned without the railways which Baltimore later would thrust out to west and south.

On April 4, coming north with the peach blossoms, Watson reëntered Pennsylvania, and on the 16th he reached Valley Forge. The cruel winter was over, but

its miseries still showed in half-naked and half-starved troops. At Bethlehem he saw the touching Easter service of the Moravians, who marched through the cemetery with musicians, the pastor reading each inscription on the headstones.

On the 29th he was back in Providence, "after an absence of about eight months," having traversed ten states of the original thirteen and traveled 2,700 miles. Immediately he wrote down a prophecy so remarkable that it is no wonder it got away from him and began to march down the ages independently of its youthful author.

This prophecy was published first in London as a quotation in *Morse's Geography*, 1789. Although Elkanah never published his journals in full, or even attempted a summary until late in life, he was in the habit of showing them to many persons, and letting the latter copy significant bits. Some of these extracts were later published without his knowledge, turning up in odd places, sometimes in ways embarrassing to him. This example, for instance, was printed in England, in Tatham's *Inland Navigation*, where it appeared as original and whence it was lifted by Dr. Hosack, probably in all innocence, and embodied in the latter's *Memoir of De Witt Clinton*. Other bits of his original material came back to him somewhat crippled after roundabout journeys. It is clear that Elkanah never thought of himself as a literary man, whose productions were in the least valuable, but rather as one spreading

information helpful to trade and expansion. He was out to make a fortune rather than a name, and even strangers could see and copy his writings with their owner's blessing. Certainly the quicker the glad tidings of this prophecy were known, the better Elkanah would be pleased:

When the extent of America is duly considered, boldly fronting the old world, blessed with every climate, capable of every production, abounding with the best harbors and rivers on the globe, overspread by three millions of souls, mostly of English descent, inheriting all their ancient enthusiasm for liberty, and enterprising almost to a fault, what may not be expected from a people, in such a country and doubling in population every twenty-five years?

The partial hand of Nature has laid out America on a much larger scale than any other country. What are called mountains in Europe are hills in America . . . lakes are reduced to ponds. In short, the map of the world presents to view no country which combines so many natural advantages, so pleasantly diversified, and which offers to agriculture, manufactures and commerce, so many resources; all of which cannot fail to conduct America to the front rank of nations. This I prophesy. It must be so. In contemplating future America, the mind is lost in the din of cities, in harbors and rivers crowded with sails, and in the immensity of its population.

The prophet was twenty years of age when he wrote this, but he had seen life.

After this long business trip, Elkanah went to Plymouth, Boston, Marblehead and Salem, cut across a

corner of New Hampshire and then returned to Boston via Lexington and Cambridge, following the route the British took in their retreat of three years before. With the exception of New York, Philadelphia and Albany, Elkanah had now visited all the chief cities of the continent. Probably no American of 1778 had seen more of America. Now for Europe.

Elkanah reached his majority January 22, 1779. His apprenticeship over, he was now free to leave the Browns, but he could not yet set up for himself, "having been deeply disappointed in the expectations I had formed in respect to my establishment in life." Apparently he wanted to go into business for himself, or perhaps, by putting some money into the Brown firm, secure rating as a junior partner. Probably the Plymouth visit was a march on funds which failed. The war no doubt had reduced the fortunes of all his connections; we know that the richest of the Winslows, his mother's people, had remained Tory and were hard put to it to keep alive. Under a flood of fiat money, hard money had gone into hiding so effectively that not even persuasive Elkanah could talk gold or silver out of his relations. Probably his swing around the present suburbs of Boston was undertaken to "raise the wind." When all these expedients came to naught, Elkanah leaped at the chance to make another journey in the Brown interest—this time to Europe. His job was to carry money and dispatches to no less a

person than Benjamin Franklin, American agent in France.

Note this young man's propensity for falling on his feet. If he had found backing, probably he never would have left America, thereby missing his unique career. Having no luck among the thrifty, timid folk of his acquaintance, he was on his way to make new friends among the great and powerful.

The fleet packet, *Mercury*, crossed the ocean in twenty-nine days, landing its passengers at St. Martin on Isle de Rhe. Elkanah, eyes wide open to every novelty in the entrancing scene of the French countryside, set off for Paris. Our young traveler has become quite a man of the world, so much so that he is content merely to report on the richly painted faces of the French ladies without drawing a Puritan moral. But he is shocked by the evidences he sees of social decay—the beggary in the towns, the destitution of the peasants and the sang-froid of the ruling classes—a France ripe for revolution as soon as the “free and equal” thesis of the Declaration of Independence has sunk a little deeper into French minds.

At Paris Elkanah presented his letters to the great Dr. Franklin, who asked him to dinner the next day and packed him off to Vergennes, the foreign minister, with the dispatches carried from America. Vergennes took him to see the royal family at chapel. In his journal Elkanah sets Louis XVI down rather lightly, as

"somewhat robust, with a full face, Roman nose and placid countenance." The poor man probably knew rather less of the condition of his people than did Elkanah himself. But our reporter accords to Marie Antoinette, "an elegant person, a fine figure and imposing aspect, and florid complexion, with bright grey eyes, full of expression." Soon, soon must this placid king and lovely queen walk the way of death by guillotine.

Old Benjamin Franklin stood then at the very height of his fame and prestige. He had brought France to the aid of America. His dinner guests greeted the wise old man with French effervescence. "One of the young ladies approached him . . . tapped him kindly on the cheek and called him Papa Franklin." The young women, indeed, rallied around the American sage, to the confusion of the younger gentlemen.

The young messenger from America hung on the social fringe of the group which was making American history in Paris. Dr. Franklin was the center of the coil, and an intricate coil it was. Yorktown was two years away, and all manner of uncertainties were in the air, making it entirely possible that a decisive engagement like Yorktown might never be fought. One possibility was that Dr. Franklin might come to terms with the excellent Mr. Alexander, whom Elkanah met at the Franklin dinner and whom he describes as "an eminent banker in Scotland; a man of distinguished

talents, and on terms of intimacy with Dr. Franklin. He was regarded here as a secret emissary of the British government."

Then there was the disturbing entanglement of the duel between Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, two of the American commissioners. "Slick Silas" has been restored to the good opinion of his countrymen by historians, while young Mr. Lee fares worse at their hands; nevertheless the revaluation came too late to save poor Silas from being flouted and disgraced. He was all, it seems, on the side of strict commercial integrity for the young Republic in the complicated business of French loans. Elkanah left America a day or two before Silas, who had been called home to explain, was dismissed from attendance upon Congress and an order issued for the auditing of his accounts. It is possible that Elkanah's precious dispatches carried the news that such action had been determined upon, and even likelier that he carried funds to speed the coöperation of the French and American forces, which could hardly be expected until France received reassurances that her expenditures were accepted as loans rather than gifts. At any rate, he waited in Paris nearly a month until the return dispatches were ready, busying himself with festivities and sightseeing. The swift little *Mercury*, at the dock in Nantes, also waited the outcome of the Paris deliberations. It was September 28 before Elkanah reached Nantes and stepped aboard the *Mercury*

with his dispatches, presumably outward bound for home.

Occurs here the first of those apparently sudden decisions of this adventurous man. Even his complete journal scarcely prepares the reader for it; but in *Men and Times of the Revolution* it comes like a bolt of lightning. Elkanah put his dispatches on board and stayed in France.

I determined (he says, in what must be considered a decidedly offhand manner) to establish in that city (Nantes) a mercantile house, although sustained by few advantages, either of connection or capital, and almost ignorant of the French language. I invested the funds which had been entrusted to me (probably by the Browns) in goods and purchased an equal amount on my own credit, and was fortunate. The result was propitious.

I also transmitted circulars to all the ports in America, in which I had formed personal acquaintances. Thus commenced my commercial career, which, in three years enabled me to build up an establishment equal to any in the city for respectability, and known throughout America and in Europe for the extent of our operations.

There speaks one of the first of the American "go-getters." Mark you, he was only twenty-one years old at the time he jumped into this venture. Balked of a chance to establish himself independently at home, he seizes the first opportunity to do so abroad. Of course, it is probable that he had inside information on the improving status of French-American affairs; possibly he had been promised the inside track on some of the intri-

cate and profitable operations which go on in war time, even among allies. He had little enough of his own to lose, and a fortune to make. Nevertheless, the decision took courage. We shall find Elkanah leaping in and out of ventures with equal celerity in the future; a quick mind was ever the best of his assets, and occasionally a liability also.

For partner in the new establishment he took one Monsieur Cossoul, a rather shadowy figure at this distance but probably substantial enough in the rating of the day. It would be interesting to have Monsieur Cossoul's opinion of his young partner, for in spite of his auspicious start, the mushroom firm encountered difficulties in due course; but, since we find Cossoul following Elkanah to America and engaging with him in another venture, his first experience must have been satisfactory. Watson's opinion of Cossoul remained so high that he named his son, born in 1803, Winslow Cossoul Watson. At the outset Cossoul seems to have carried all the burden, for Elkanah fell sick and then seized upon his convalescence as a period in which to learn French and travel. A robust affection held the partners together through fair weather and foul, with Elkanah dominant and rather patronizing Cossoul, whom he addresses as "my honest little fellow."

For French the young merchant went to the clerical college at Ancenis, twenty-four miles distant, where he, though a heretic, was nicely housed and well taught at

\$150 a year. After college hours he visited the peasantry roundabout, reaching the conclusion that social France needed a stern dose of Americanism. He visited one cottage where a family of seven lived on wages of twelve cents a day, yet paid out of that \$4 a year to the King. The riot of the French Revolution is clearly augured in these words of his:

The ignorance and degradation of the peasants of France, deprived of the rights of freehold property, shut out from rank in the army and navy, living on the coarsest fare, and the mere slaves of a proud noblesse and corrupt clergy, must strike every liberal mind as the worst political feature of the institutions of France.

From college Watson wrote to John Adams in Paris the first of a long series of letters exchanged over forty years, asking him for advice as to "my movements and course while in Europe." The good Mr. Adams replied at length, advising the youth "to cultivate the manners of your own country, not those of Europe."

In finding the faithful Cossoul, Elkanah solved the difficulties of absentee management. His year at Ancenis over, he went to Rennes for the winter of 1780-1781, because Rennes "was distinguished for the correctness of its French idiom." The townspeople of the better class proved hospitable, and Elkanah discovered that the school for graceful French manners is the home. In the spring he flitted back to Nantes, observing:

On my return to Nantes, I was half French in everything, save the graces; these, I fear, I shall never possess.

They must grow with your youth, for they never can be wooed like a fair lady.

Our young man of the world, with all his schooling in manners, had a sad time with old Tom Paine, who came to Nantes as Henry Laurens' secretary. Elkanah had been a red-hot Paineite on paper and in America, but in the flesh and in France, his enthusiasm for the great man failed. He found old Tom unmistakably foul, loaned him a shirt and browbeat him into taking a bath by denying Paine a packet of English newspapers until he smelled less like brimstone. Expatriates the world over are always being mortified by home folks on visits; Elkanah was always somewhat sensitive, and at this stage seems to have been unduly so. For instance, he had a terrific row with the local priest over a public affront, sought the padre out afterward and browbeat him into apologizing on bended knee. A leading citizen aged twenty-two is apt to be combative.

At Nantes Watson became intimate with the extraordinary Louis Littlepage, then on his way to Madrid to act on John Jay's staff at the American embassy. Falling out with Jay, Littlepage worked his way into the good graces of the Spanish monarchy and went on to personal triumphs in Poland and Russia, where his manly beauty commended itself, 'tis said, to the Empress Catherine. Watson always liked to cultivate odd characters.

There was, for instance, the "eccentric Mrs. Wright,"

whom Elkanah met on his next visit to Paris. Patience Wright molded wax figures and affairs of state. While in England, a nation partial to wax figures, her rooms in Pall Mall "were a fashionable lounging place for the nobility and distinguished men." Of course it was merely a coincidence that led her to England in 1767, three years after the astute Dr. Franklin went thither as the agent for the colonies. A hoydenish old dame was Mrs. Wright, calling the King and Queen familiarly by name, George or Charlotte, while modeling them.

Whilst in England (writes Elkanah) she communicated much information to Franklin, and remained in London until '75 or '76, engaged in that kind of intercourse with him and the American government, by which she was placed in extreme hazard.

Hospitable England, at war, finally grew too hot for Patience Wright. She followed her chief to Paris, and soon established another salon, where Elkanah indulged his flair for meeting both the great and the queer. As he was fairly rolling in money, he commissioned her to do a head of Franklin.

After it was completed, both being invited to dine with Franklin, I conveyed her to Passy in my carriage, she bearing the head upon her lap. No sooner in the presence of the Doctor, than she placed one head by the side of the other. "There," she exclaimed, "are twin brothers."

The scene neatly illustrates the vivacity of Madame Wright, the good humor of the aged Franklin, and the consummate gall of our young business man, M'sieu Watson. He had arranged for the aged Doctor Franklin, at a most critical junction of affairs, to sit patiently to the artist, in order that he, Watson, might have a "show piece." "Not bad," we can fancy him saying, "for a twenty-three-year-old out of Plymouth." Elkanah got his money's worth in fun out of this head. He would attach it to a dummy dressed like Franklin, and invite his friends in for a quick look at the Doctor busy at his desk, or reading by candlelight. The Mayor of Nantes came in full dress to this droll reception. On another occasion he displayed the Doctor in an upper window in London, after peace had been declared, with such success that he had to go solemnly round to newspaper offices and correct their reports that Franklin was in town again.

Watson had a reason for cultivating Mrs. Wright just then, for he was about to set off on a tour. Our Patience knew someone in every city, and she anticipated his arrivals with letters which won him a ready welcome. But the exchange of courtesies had been mutual. Watson for his part had given Joseph Wright, the son who painted and modeled Washington, a free passage to America in one of the Watson & Cossoul ships, a favor of no mean value.

Affluent Elkanah, with the faithful Cossoul raking in

the livres at Nantes, set forth from Paris October 27, 1781. Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown eight days before but no one in Europe would know it for weeks to come. In fact our traveler toured Belgium and northern France leisurely enough and yet was back in Paris before the good news arrived. On the evening of November 19th he had dined with the Doctor. They knew that Rochambeau and Washington had succeeded in joining their forces, that De Grasse had entered the Chesapeake and that De Barras, with seven ships of the line, had left Rhode Island to join De Grasse. They were informed, also, that the British fleet had sailed from New York with reënforcements for Cornwallis, and from London came a report that more British were en route for New York. Vast events were in the making, yet a whim of weather, in those days of sailing ships, might bring victory where all else had failed. Fair weather for De Barras; a storm for his pursuers; on such uncertainties hung the fate of the New World. For once Franklin's perennial calm seemed almost to abandon him. This was the great test; if it failed, the French, tiring of their distant adventure, might not stick for another. Their treasury was getting low; murmurs of discontent everywhere. But at eleven o'clock, after Watson and Bancroft had departed, Franklin received this answer to his prayers, a message from Vergennes, foreign minister of France:

The Duc de Lausan arrived this evening, with the agreeable news that the combined armies of France and America have forced Cornwallis to capitulate . . . laid down their arms as prisoners. About six thousand troops, eighteen hundred sailors, twenty-two stands of colors and one hundred and seventy pieces of cannon. . . .

Franklin relayed this message on to Watson next morning. He rushed to Franklin's side. The patriarch said: "There is no parallel in history of two entire armies being captured from the same enemy in any one war."

Burgoyne's, and now that of Cornwallis. Between those two bags, the young Republic had small pickings, but the two major victories proved decisive beyond the minor ones scored by the foe.

Watson rode from Paris to Nantes in a blaze of festive illuminations. Watson & Cossoul did their bit by employing the nuns of a Nantes convent, excellent needlewomen, to do a Masonic apron for George Washington from a sketch by Watson, combining, as a decorative motif, the French and American flags. George accepted the gift in a letter of August 10, 1782, which modestly ascribes all praise for the victory to the "Grand Architect of the universe."

In addition to tasting the delight of being a patron of the arts, Elkanah was now enjoying the satisfaction of helping the needy. There was plenty to do with, for the firm's books showed a profit of 40,000 guineas in

'82, after three years of activity, during which our hero had been away from Nantes more than half the time. The partners employed seven clerks and had six ships in their fleet. It looked as if Elkanah was a made man for life. Everyone thought so, including himself. He gave generously to his distressed relatives in America and to American prisoners at Mill Prison, near Plymouth, England. Through the kindly offices of the Reverend Mr. Heath, who lived near-by, Elkanah's money relieved the needs of many prisoners and helped some to escape. Among the latter was Colonel Silas Talbot, who will appear later in this tale. The ease with which Elkanah's money found its way into Mill Prison shows how lightly the English at home took their little row with the colonists.

In the summer of 1782 Elkanah determined to follow his money to England. He gives two reasons for his decision. First: health. Always subject to bronchial ailments, he had suffered in the plague of influenza which swept Europe that summer and thought a change of air would set him up. Second: business. He perceived a general peace coming and wanted to take advantage of commercial changes which might follow. In other words, establish some British connections to offset the British competition which would set in immediately upon the declaration of peace. He might have added a third reason: that he liked to be bustling about, going places and seeing things. Five years ago he started south

with \$50,000 sewed in his clothes, and had been on the move practically ever since, except for his gay college days at Ancenis. Ten months he had been at Nantes. Time to go somewhere! He set off on August 31 for Paris.

With the flair for getting into the center of events, Elkanah walked into the informal peace conference which ended the American Revolution. There was the great Doctor, painfully infirm now, and John Adams and the stern Mr. Jay, up from Spain. And equally important, for peace purposes, there was the estimable Benjamin Vaughan, friend and confidant of the Earl of Shelburne, that stubborn, lonely figure in British politics to whom the discomfited war party had tossed responsibility for their errors and who, both in spirit and letter, was determined upon making a "good peace," a peace that would last. Dr. Vaughan, LL.D., Harvard, 1807, became a member of Parliament on the Whig side. He returned to America in 1793, settling at Hallowell, Maine. Knowing America and Americans, he was an ideal confidential agent for Shelburne at this juncture.

Approaching Dr. Franklin for a passport, Elkanah was told of the risks he ran in going, an avowed rebel, into an exasperated enemy country. The Doctor yielded, however, giving Watson, in addition to a passport, letters to the celebrated doctors, Priestley of Birmingham and Price of Hackney, and to the great Edmund

Burke. Finally Vaughan took the risk out of the journey by entrusting to this informal messenger a packet of papers for Lord Shelburne, with instructions to deliver them upon the moment of arrival.

Here was another example of the Watson luck! No doubt Vaughan had other emissaries he could trust, yet he chose Watson—a man of the other side, an enemy in the strict sense of the word, to carry the results of his conference to London. With his faithful servant, Le Fleur, who receives many rhetorical tributes from his master, Watson rode without stopping to Calais. There he seized the opportunity to whisk out of France with him, as an extra servant, a young Englishman not long out of a French prison. The American Revolution was a strange sort of war, a duel between cousins, in which blood often ran thicker than water. This rescue had been arranged and pressed upon Watson by an American, Stephen Sayre, who had been a banker in England, but who had been ruined financially and imprisoned for high treason in the Tower of London. Once free, Sayre went to France and joined Franklin's staff of confidential agents; yet here he was, out of sheer pity, engineering the escape of an enemy from the custody of an ally.

Watson landed his man in England safely, and delivered Vaughan's dispatches to Shelburne, "who graciously received me, and spent some time in a free conversation on American affairs." The next day he presented a

letter of introduction to the Duke of Manchester, who assured him the government had just come to a decision to acknowledge American independence. The papers had announced the arrival of a messenger of peace. "Are you the person?" asked the Duke. Watson must have been aware, as he answered "Yes," that he had filled an historic rôle.

After Elkanah presented his letters, he moved leisurely in London society a while and then traveled through England, making no end of discerning contrasts between British scenes, manners and customs and those of his native America and adopted France. In Birmingham he met a world-shaking pigmy named Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, and also that most distinguished of Tories—or Loyalists, as you will—Peter Oliver, late Chief Justice of Massachusetts. Young Mr. Watson was rather in demand among the Americans in England who wished to find out where they stood under the new régime. In Oliver's interest Watson wrote a guarded letter to John Adams, which brought forth the reply that vindictiveness was not consistent with Adams' principles. Years later, in 1817, Adams referred again to Watson's letter:

When Chief Justice Oliver said to you, in 1782, that he dreaded me more than any man in America, he did not explain his reasons. He knew that I was the first projector of the impeachment of the Judges, and he believed that measure to be the critical event on which the revolution turned.

All this sightseeing and handshaking, however, were but preludes to the great day for which Watson had been waiting—December 5, 1782—when His Majesty, George III, who in his blindness had cut adrift a considerable part of his realm, must acknowledge his error in the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament. All the preceding day Elkanah had been sitting for his portrait to the great painter, John Singleton Copley, also an American. All that remained to paint, as night fell, was the background in which was to appear a ship flying the Stars and Stripes, upon which a rising sun shone. A strong, wide, lively portrait, in pose and treatment. The mercantile motif appears in a Watson & Cossoul bill and the John Brown connection is neatly established by a letter from that gentleman on a table in the foreground. These details, like George Washington's nun-made Masonic apron, flowed from Elkanah's quaint mingling of patriotism and art. The original Copley is owned by a descendant, but if you care to see a faithful copy of the Copley portrait by Ezra Ames, walk into the Albany Institute of History and Art. There it is, flag, ship, letters, Elkanah and all. Copley thought it hardly decent to paint in the Stars and Stripes until the King had spoken. So they waited for the fateful morrow.

In the House of Lords our hero, acting on the advice of Lord Ferrers, pushed his way well to the front and stood right beside "Black Dick" Howe, Admiral, R.N.,

whose family had not exactly distinguished itself in the now historic conflict. Still, the Howes were not the men to weep at any extension of liberty. The Copley picture shows Elkanah as he must have looked on that occasion—medium height, full, florid countenance, a beautiful and generous mouth, strong round chin with signs of good living already showing, inquiring nose, restless brown eyes, a figure running more to chest than to leg, and the whole well turned out, as befits a vigorous, pushing fellow. He wears a bright red coat, a rose-sprigged waistcoat, ruffles and stock, and on his head the wig of fashion. Copley was there and also his fellow painter, Benjamin West, and some American ladies, all awaiting the great moment, when pomp of ancient ceremonial, procession of gartered lords and gaitered bishops, pageant of Crown and Orb and all the rest, would be so much stage setting for the stern reality of confessed failure. A stubborn king, this George, always half mad and soon to be all mad, beset by delusions of grandeur outrunning his intelligence, but even he must bow to the stern logic of those who lost armies, lost seamen, lost cannon, lost colonies, lost continent. “. . . and offer to declare them,” he hesitates in agitation, “free and independent states.”

Watson and Copley go back to the studio, the Stars and Stripes are touched in upon the mast by Copley's deft fingers. “This was, I imagine,” says the subject and background designer, “the first American flag

hoisted in Old England." Not a very public raising; still, I feel sure they drank a toast. Elkanah would want to do the thing in the best possible style.

King George received a rebuke next day from Mr. Burke in the House of Commons, Elkanah attending. Burke was reproached by Young Will Pitt for undue levity, but staunch old Conway clinched the debate by reminding Commons that "the recognition of American independence was explicit and unconditional." Burke, the great Edmund, took Elkanah by the elbow and bowed him around the floor, introducing him to Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Conway and others as "the messenger of peace."

A week later, after a visit to Windsor, the dove flew back to Paris, handed to Doctor Franklin a London newspaper containing a "particular and detailed account of his death and funeral," and then rode on to Nantes in style, with the populace wondering what sort of noble he might be. Elkanah would hardly ride in such lordly style again. France was sliding to the abyss of bankruptcy, and taking with it to ruin the "respectable establishment" of Watson & Cossoul, 40,000 guineas profit, six ships and all. In the spring of '83, the National Bank of France, where army and navy bills had been made payable, suspended payment for one year. Elkanah wrote:

In common with all other Americans, whose business connections were involved in French fiscal operations, our

house was overwhelmed by the effect of this ordinance, and I returned to London, in the summer of 1783, prostrated and impoverished.

The unpublished *Journals* show that Elkanah saw the French financial storm and tried to escape it. On September 12, 1782, he wrote to Cossoul, "a sudden peace would prove our ruin," and advised his partner to countermand orders, contract plans and draw in funds. Nevertheless he failed to see that England also would be affected by post-war depression. He set up an office in London and plunged to the extent of £20,000. At Nantes, Cossoul struck the flag, May 19, 1783, and two months later the London house of Watson & Cossoul surrendered to its creditors.

Liquidation took some time. On advice of counsel, Elkanah held out 1500 gold guineas, but eventually turned that over also as a "debt of honor." He became "humbled to the dust. . . . What transition in a year!" On January 20, 1784, he wrote Cossoul that he was going to be discharged but he remained in the clutches of his creditors until August. Then, apparently on borrowed funds, he set out for Holland. Thus vanished Elkanah's first fortune, 40,000 gold guineas, six ships with 300 seamen, and a little of the superb self-confidence which our young America had paraded so gaily before the shrewd Old World.

Well, it might have been worse. Elkanah started with nothing and so was no worse off, financially, than

he had been. Also he had mastered the French language and manners, enjoyed a year at college, traveled in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and England—and he owned a Copley. Another intangible—he knew people who counted, had contacts in each of the great trading nations and had gained a unique experience. So I fancy Elkanah's despairing language is slightly overdrawn. At any rate his was not a nature to remain disconsolate for long. To the end of his days, he remained resilient, able to rise above misfortune, to find new interests when old ones failed him; which was often.

In his Netherlands journey, which he described in his "Tour of Holland," he paid close heed to the good municipal housekeeping of the Dutch. In the women he noted bad figures but comely faces, so of a type that they all looked like sisters. At Rotterdam he saw for the first time in a foreign port the Stars and Stripes flying at a masthead. Jubilation, even in a disconsolate bankrupt! At the Hague he dined with the American minister, his old friend, John Adams.

A silence fell upon the table afterward, when the two men, so vastly different in their natures and point of view, had talked themselves out. Then the elder, apropos of nothing, exclaimed with vehemence: "Yes, it must be so; twelve sail of the line supported by a proportion of frigates. When America, my friend, shall possess such a fleet, she may bid defiance upon her own

coast to any naval power in Europe." Little was John Adams aware that, in arriving at that decision, he was laying out work for disarmament conferences a century and a half later.

These were all side interests, however; Elkanah had eyes chiefly for canals. Franklin had talked to him about the need of canals in America, and Watson's journals show that he studied the French canals closely, even to the point of mapping those of the Loire Valley. The water transport of Holland, its harbors and streams, natural and artificial, fascinated him. He found one could travel comfortably on canals, three miles an hour, a penny a mile, and cheaper than in any other country. His last word of Holland and the first intimation that he is back in England have to do with canals, what they cost, what they will pay.

Elkanah, in short, had become canal-minded. The prospect enthralled him of shipping cargoes cheaply across the enormous America which lived in his mind long before the Louisiana Purchase. And, as anyone could see from the Duke of Bridgewater's dividends, there was money in it. That union of duty and profit which begets progress possessed the soul of this bold, temporarily strapped, business man. Henceforth, to make America canal-minded would be one of his burning passions. Travelers are always returning from Europe on fire to make America this-or-that-minded, especially when there is money in it for the apostle.

Probably Elkanah would have taken canals less seriously if the National Bank of France had remained solvent. For that matter, if he had stayed rich, he might have ceased being interesting and significant.

Certainly if he had stayed rich, he would have missed one London contact which clinched his bias against slavery. In a library he read the published letters of Ignatius Sancho, an educated African. He visited the little shop conducted by Sancho's poor widow, a mulatto, praised her husband's work and became acquainted with the family. This Negro family, composed of cultivated persons, schooled in all the arts of polite living, opened the visitor's eyes to the potential capacity for civilization of America's Negro population. In the South he had looked upon the black race with pity; now he began to see that America held itself down by holding the blacks down. He became an abolitionist on economic rather than upon humane or religious grounds.

On August 24, 1784, he took ship for home. How would America welcome this experienced, but still poor, man of the world?

After a wretched passage the ship made Narragansett Bay on October 3. Elkanah raced ashore at Warwick Neck, secured a horse and rode into Providence. He had been away more than five years, and was so changed that old John Brown did not know him. Neither did his own father when Elkanah called upon him at Plymouth a few weeks later. He remained in New Eng-

land only a short time. The passion to talk canals in high places drove him south, to no less a place than Mount Vernon, where reigned the uncrowned king of America, George Washington, resting after his campaigns. Nathanael Greene gave Elkanah a letter to the chief, and off went the young man by packet to New York on December 3. The bent of his mind is reflected in the opinion that the passage of Hurl-gate (Hellgate) where his ship experienced difficulties, could be eased by a short canal on the Long Island side, with a single lock.

At New York City, where Elkanah had never alighted before, he stayed a month with an uncle. After London it seemed a poor place, with its irregular streets, 1,400 houses and 20,000 inhabitants; in fact, New York City needed Elkanah's brain-child, the Erie Canal, behind it, before the city could march to leadership in urban population. In 1784, with the wrath of war still in evidence, the great metropolis had scarcely advanced beyond the Dutch village stage. There wasn't a bathroom in the place, and its unwashed citizenry could not grasp Elkanah's message of the great western world.

The voyage to Mount Vernon deserves to be set forth by way of contrast with present schedules—Philadelphia in two hours, Washington in five and a half hours. Elkanah crossed the Hudson in an open ferry to Paulus Hook, and the Hackensack and Passaic rivers on the ice. He slept at Newark the first night out; the

stage-sleigh landed him at Princeton the second night, and at Philadelphia the third. Three days for a journey now taken by commuters between seven and nine of a morning, six days a week.

When Elkanah first went south, he took a back route, as Philadelphia was in the hands of the British, so this was his first look at the capital of the country. Admirable he found the clean, thriving city of 50,000, with nearly four times as many houses as New York, and mostly of brick. He dined with Robert Morris, who encouraged him to push public improvements. Departing, he crossed the Schuylkill on the ice, and by stage reached Elkton, Maryland, by nightfall. The stage from Elkton to Baltimore was a poor thing, "a century behind England"; but the traveler forgot his discomfort in joy at the progress of Baltimore since his previous visit of seven years before. It had completely outstripped Alexandria, thereby reversing Watson's prophecy. On the 23d, ten days after leaving Philadelphia and thirteen traveling days after leaving New York, he presented his letters at Mount Vernon, together with two bundles of books for the General from Granville Sharp, the London philanthropist, which Sharp had confided to Watson's care in London.

Elkanah stayed at Mount Vernon "two of the richest days of my life." Washington was the perfect host. Rupert Hughes, in his excellent biography of the great George, refers to Watson's account of his bedside visit

from the thoughtful hero. That page from Elkanah's journal is, indeed, one of the choice bits of Washingtoniana. Hard travel had brought a return of Watson's bronchitis. In the night a fit of coughing overtook him. Presently the door gently opened and the Father of His Country stood beside his guest's bed with a bowl of hot tea in his august hand. Truly there was a paternal strain in Washington.

On the morrow the two men went deeply into canal schemes. Washington was already full of plans to develop the interior and bring it his way, by throwing locks around the falls of the Potomac. From the General's journals, Elkanah copied the former's calculation of distances between Detroit and various Atlantic points. Washington estimated the distance from Detroit to the headwaters of the Potomac as 378 miles less than the distance from Detroit to Montreal; ergo, with the Potomac canalized, Alexandria would outstrip all other ports in handling the mid-America trade to Europe. It was a grand scheme, with incidental benefits to Washington's immense landholdings along the line; but it overlooked certain essentials, which Elkanah soon fathomed. He came away immensely heartened by Washington's interest in canals, but, if he went in the hope of a closer connection, he departed disappointed.

His return to Massachusetts carried him through the wilds of Manhattan on horseback to the Harlem River. "The island," he writes, "appears barren, rocky and

broken." Oh, Elkanah, how sadly your powers of prophecy failed you on that ride! Those barren hillsides would some day be worth more than all the canals of mid-America, would catch and hold no inconsiderable portion of the wealth laboriously created in the interior. But not yet! Canals first; then Harlem rents!

Apparently Elkanah saw that before he could become the canal magnate of America, he would have to make another haul. His story of success abroad apparently did not impress these thrifty provincials with a little money to invest, especially when the traveled young man, with perhaps a slight touch of superiority and an occasional French idiom, tried to sell them such new-fangled things as canals. They might listen to a rich, solid man; but not to an impecunious fellow out of a job. Therefore, Elkanah reëntered trade. The faithful Cossoul joined him in the venture, and established himself at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, while Elkanah hied himself to Edenton, North Carolina, to handle the American end of the business from there.

So once more we find him moving southward. This time he went by packet from Baltimore to Norfolk, and then had the usual miserable journey through the coast country to his destination. Precisely what Elkanah did, in the way of work or trade, does not appear in his skeletonized *Journal*. Probably there were still pickings for astute traders, even in disturbed France. Probably Elkanah found cargoes in North Carolina which Cossoul

disposed of in the West Indies or moved on to France. But Haiti also grew turbulent, and this business of Cos-soul & Watson, like its predecessor, dropped to nothing. Precisely as before, our incurable optimist had spread himself at the profitable beginning, buying himself an estate on the Chowan River and settling down to the pleasant, leisurely life of a planter-merchant.

In the heyday of this enterprise, however, he managed to travel on another of his amazing journeys, the whole length and breadth of North Carolina, visiting planters and Indian villages, sizing up the country and enjoying the hunting and adventure. But his last winter in North Carolina was spent "in dreary seclusion at my estate." In the spring of '88 he sold the estate and came north by water, ten days from the mouth of the Chowan to Providence. Another dream had been dished. Elkanah was now thirty, and not quite as sure of himself as when he stood, a successful youngster of twenty-four, in the House of Lords. Still he was by no means an object of charity. He proposed marriage to the "amiable, pious and virtuous" Rachel Smith of Norton, Massachusetts, and, while Miss Smith prepared her soul and her trousseau for the great adventure of matrimony, Elkanah set off west. He drew near his promised land at last; he was going to canal country now, the land of plains and waterways, the easy way to the vastnesses he had visioned ten years before. In the meantime, through all these wanderings and chances of fortune,

he had been but preparing himself for this advance in force upon the water-level route to the West.

Elkanah's condensation of his journals was a task of his old age. He passed on before the task could be completed, and his book was finished by his son, Winslow Cossoul Watson. The treatment becomes more staid, perhaps because condensation seemed more vital. However, there are many and long quotations direct from the manuscript, which preserve Elkanah's rotund yet precise sentences. One has only to compare his productions with the ill-spelled and sprawling personal records of the time to perceive that Elkanah had attained a superior education despite its informality.

He started west through Springfield, Massachusetts, and detoured from the direct road to visit Hudson, New York, then only four years old but a notable example of New England push. Its population, all immigrants from the eastward, were already showing the more phlegmatic Dutch how to make industry go, with warehouses, wharves, a ropewalk and shipping. He seems to have visited Albany in a spirit of curiosity, to see what a completely Dutch town looked like. As yet he was unaware of its superb geographical position as the gateway to the West, a truth which dawned on him a little later and moved him to make Albany his home. Now he observed its serene atmosphere being stirred by new forces for the first time, and he records his opinion

that in fifty years Dutch would be extinct in Albany as a spoken language. Elkanah helped to make his own prophecy come true.

Eight miles from Albany he called at the glass works of John de Neufville, one of the almost forgotten benefactors of America. Watson had corresponded with De Neufville years before when the latter lived in splendor at his countryseat near Amsterdam. The negotiator of the treaty between the States-General and America, De Neufville's mercantile interests had been special marks of attack in the war declared on Holland shortly after the existence of the treaty was discovered with the capture of Laurens and his documents. Now, sadly reduced in circumstances, De Neufville was attempting a new start in the land in whose behalf he had risked his lordly fortune. Watson found him in a miserable log cabin, destitute of all comforts. Worse yet, Elkanah's quick eye appraised the glass works as a "hopeless enterprise," which soon proved to be the case.

At Schenectady the traveler marked most approvingly the beginnings of Union College, an embryonic academy which he later aided. His next stop brought a return of some of the bread he had cast upon the waters in the days of his affluence at Nantes, for he visited at Johnson Hall Colonel Silas Talbot, the new proprietor, none other than the man whose escape from Mill prison in England had been financed by the Reverend Mr. Heath on Elkanah's funds. Talbot bought Sir William John-

son's noble estate at auction at a low price and paid the bill in depreciated currency. He was the rich man now; and his former benefactor probably received back his loan with interest, and found plenty of use for it.

The Mohawk Valley entranced him with its fertility, but he found it woefully lacking in accommodations for travelers. No wonder, for it had not yet recovered from savage pummeling during the war. Conditions were worse than they had been twenty years earlier, when the strong hand of Sir William kept affairs in order. Watson continued to Fort Stanwix, lured by promise of seeing one of the picturesque sights of the frontier—a treaty meeting with the remnants of the Six Nations. There he found, among Indian chiefs in amazingly rich regalia, Governor George Clinton and John Tayler, Indian agent, later lieutenant governor. Becoming acquainted with Tayler was a rare stroke of fortune for Watson; in a few years they would be banking confederates. Also he met the French ambassador, Count Moutier, flitting about in the hope of recovering some bit of Canada for France, and that astonishing woman, Madame de Biron, who mingled statecraft with an overwhelming love of adventure in out-of-the-way corners of America.

At Stanwix Elkanah fairly let himself go on the subject of canals. This was canal country. List to the seer, whose eyes were open while yet other men's were closed to the imperatives of geography:

In contemplating the position of Fort Stanwix, at the head of Bateaux navigation on the Mohawk river, within one mile of Wood Creek, which runs West toward Lake Ontario, I am led to think it will become in time the emporium of commerce between Albany and the western world. . . . Should the Little Falls be ever locked, the obstructions in the Mohawk river removed, and a canal between that river and Wood Creek be formed, so as to unite the rivers flowing east with those running west, and other canals made, and obstructions removed to Fort Oswego—who can doubt that by such bold operations, the State of New York has within her power, by a grand measure of policy, to divert the future trade of Lake Ontario, and the great lakes above, from Alexandria and Quebec, to Albany and New York?

The great General Washington might sit at Mount Vernon vainly calculating the distances from Alexandria to Detroit, but here was lesser Elkanah, standing at the portage where East and West met, and seeing in his mind's eye the imperial development which came to pass in his own lifetime.

Spurred by this vision, Elkanah set out for the West posthaste, intent upon reaching Detroit, but the season was too far advanced and he was forced to turn back. However, he had felt the challenge of sailing west, for the first time, in the interior of America. Descending the Mohawk in a bateau, he investigated the new towns arising, at present Troy and Cohoes, weighing their commercial possibilities and evidently pondering the welcome they would give a go-ahead young man with

European experience and a passion to improve transportation. He decided upon Albany.

Upon careful investigation and mature reflection, it appears to my mind that Albany is one of the most favorable positions in America for the future enjoyment of a vast internal commerce. . . . It may control the fur trade of the lakes; it must occupy the avenues which penetrate into the valley of the Mohawk, and will be the depot of the produce from the luxuriant territory of the Genesee.

Elkanah sailed down the Hudson to New York, spent a month there, and then returned to Providence to get his affairs in shape for another change of base. He married Miss Smith in 1789 and brought her to Albany. This was by no means the last change of residence she would make in the train of her restless spouse, but she bore all the vicissitudes of life with Elkanah well enough to earn this tribute from his busy pen after more than fifty years of wedded life:

Never was man more blessed with an amiable, pious and virtuous wife. Wherever my wandering steps have been led, by chance or caprice, she has been beloved by all classes. To me she has been everything.

Albany welcomed the Watsons with its usual calm, but soon vouchsafed him a certificate to the freedom of the city, dated May 28, 1790. His awakening sense of thrift rebelled at the necessity of paying five pounds for the document, yet it was necessary to enable him to trade and own property. Almost immediately he began



RACHEL WATSON

Medallion portraits by an unknown sculptor, probably around 1820 (in plaster, 15 inches in diameter), now in the possession of a great-grandson, Mark Skinner Watson, *The Sun*, Baltimore, Md.



ELKANAH WATSON



to campaign against this feudal monopoly, based upon the Duke of York's settlement of 1764, but sadly out of place in a democratic republic. Within a few years the impost was abolished, Elkanah leading the fight in the council chamber. Thereafter, a citizen of the United States, after establishing residence, could vote in Albany without paying well for the privilege.

In other ways Elkanah must have been a sore trial to the satisfied Dutch burghers. He railed against their broken pavements, lack of street lighting, and most of all, against their ancient practice of discharging the water from their quaint roofs upon the streets through long spouts, an arrangement still visible in some of the smaller towns in the neighborhood. He shouted so strongly for improvements that he was once chased to cover by Dutch housewives, waving brooms and shouting, "Here comes that infernal paving Yankee." Elkanah asserts that he did not run away "as some of my friends insisted, but walked off at a quick pace."

It would hardly do for Elkanah to appear undignified at this stage in his fortunes. He was now a banker, having talked the local capitalists into founding the Bank of Albany, first in the city, in the year 1792. But no bank could hold Elkanah Watson to a desk forever. He journeyed to Philadelphia, visiting Robert Morris and going to the grave of his departed friend and patron, Dr. Franklin. At their last interview, in Paris, six years before, "Franklin observed that all his old friends were

dead, and he found himself alone, in the midst of a new generation, and added, alike characteristic of the man and the philosopher, 'he was in their way, and it was time he was off the stage.' " Well, old Ben was off the stage now, but our rising banker was not the man to forget him.

Through these years Elkanah dinned canals into the ears of his moneyed and influential friends. In 1791, he prevailed upon three of them to journey with him through central New York. All were men of wealth and prestige, representatives of powerful families—Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, Stephen N. Bayard and General Philip Van Cortlandt. They followed the waterways to within twenty-four miles of Lake Ontario, then west to the salt springs near present Syracuse. After meeting the head man of the Onondagas, Watson sets down a list of the royalties he has seen in his travels, which is useful to the reader as a résumé of his rapid movements:

Little Carpenter, king of the Cherokees, February, 1778.

Louis XVI, King of France, September, 1779.

Joseph, Emperor of Germany, October, 1781.

George III, King of Great Britain, December, 1782.

The Stadtholder of Holland, June, 1787. (Should be 1784)

Newriver, king of the Catawbias, October, 1787.

Kiadote, king of the Onondagas, September, 1791.

In spite of the lateness of the season the party pressed on to Cayuga and Seneca lakes, whose contrasting

beauties Elkanah neatly records. At the new township of Ovid they turned back, Bayard and Van Cortlandt electing to travel by land, Van Rensselaer and Watson by water. But before leaving the lake country Elkanah recorded, as of September 23, 1791, a skeleton plan of a canal system which, as he believed, would knock George Washington's Alexandria project into oblivion. Of course he states the issue more deferentially:

Thus also the great plan of Washington, to divert the commerce of the great regions in the west, even the fur-trade from Detroit to his beloved Alexandria, would be subjected to at least fair competition. Commerce, like water, will seek its natural level, but where once the current has taken a settled direction, it will not be easy to divert its course.

The knock-out plan is neatly set forth under five heads and a "lastly." With certain reservations it established Elkanah Watson as the first to think his way through New York by water. Colonel Christopher Colles, an Irish engineer of skill and intelligence, had presented to the Legislature in 1784 a plan for removing the obstructions in the Mohawk, and throwing locks around Cohoes Falls, Little Falls and the Fort Schuyler portage (now Rome). His plan failed, probably for lack of support, without reaching the stage of incorporation. Watson's plan went further geographically and it was pushed through to a finish.

Elkanah's calculations of the cost of the various steps

were hopelessly inadequate, as he came to see, but his grand conception remained substantially sound. Here, as in his own ventures, his weakness and his strength manifested themselves. He was a born promoter but an indifferent financier; a man of vision rather than a patient administrator, a seer rather than a builder. When things moved quickly, he was all enthusiasm; when they moved slowly, he soon tired of the game and leaped into something else. But his projects all had in them some measure of public weal.

An example of his push was the Albany-Schenectady stage line. When Van Rensselaer and Watson reached the latter town, after six weeks' absence from home, they were distressed to find no transport for the remaining seventeen miles unless they rode on a load of shingles or traveled behind two half-broke colts. Elkanah exhorted the innkeeper to introduce regular stage service; and two weeks later pressed the improvement on one Beal, who carried the weekly mail on horseback from Albany to Canajoharie. Two months later Beal had a weekly stage in operation, horn and all. Albany became a stage center following this humble beginning, and a good deal of money was made in the business, but Elkanah received none of it. Nevertheless he took pride in starting the trade, and it was, indeed, an evidence of success in his best rôle—that of moving others to carry out the practical ideas which buzzed in

his head, but which he was too impatient to see through to the end on his own account.

Once at home, he lobbied the Legislature, and with the aid of General Philip Schuyler, who was then the power in the Senate, secured the passage of an act by which two canal companies were chartered. The subscription did not fill locally, but Elkanah found Philadelphia backing through his old friend, Robert Morris, the banker of the Revolution. These companies, although later overshadowed by the Erie Canal, so improved communications between Schenectady and the head of Seneca Lake, that the per ton cost of moving freight between those points fell from \$100 to \$28 a ton. But improving transport through a new country, either by rail or canal, has been found a precarious business, with interest rates high and cargoes light. The first dividend was paid in 1798, and thereafter none until 1813, after which they became regular at an average rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. A letter of Elkanah's from New York to his old friend, Jeremiah Van Rensselaer in Albany, in 1798, indicates that the venture has been a financial disappointment, and that Elkanah is again hard up. Nevertheless in that same year he pushed through the Legislature a charter authorizing a company to build a canal around Niagara Falls, with the purpose of uniting the waters of Ontario with those of the upper lakes and bringing the whole trade of the Northwest

through his New York canals. With another director, Richard Holt, he presented a detailed report with estimates, and the company undertook an exact survey later; but the project is still slumbering.

Years later, in 1820, when De Witt Clinton was monopolizing the center of the canal stage, Colonel Robert Troup, a former judge of the United States District Court, examined the whole question of early canal history and gave Watson full credit for priority in plan and effort. The controversy which followed moved Elkanah to publish the journal of his western explorations, together with Colonel Troup's findings. Colonel Troup took up the cudgels on behalf of Watson's priority again in 1829. In his discourse of that year he quotes General Schuyler, in whose hands Elkanah had placed his journal of the western trip, as saying "the observations made by Mr. Watson, in his tour to the western part of the State, first turned my attention to that important object and induced me to offer to the Senate the Act incorporating the Western and Northern Inland Lock Navigation Companies." This would seem to fix the laurel firmly on Watson's brow, as Schuyler was the source of the legislation essential to lock construction. Colles' plan never moved any freight, but Watson put his through effectively.

It was Elkanah's habit to begin his drives for banking and canal capital with an anonymous "piece in the paper." Up to this time his chief journalistic effort had

been to reply to Sir William Pepperrell, Bart., in the London *Chronicle* of September 20, 1782, when that pensioned nobleman criticized the colonies. Later, when Watson discovered in America the sweet uses of publicity, he became an inveterate letter writer to the press. Scrap book after scrap book is filled with his newspaper letters, in which he advised his countrymen on nearly every subject within their ken, from fertilizer to foreign affairs, with special emphasis on free schools, canals, turnpikes, cider-making, maple-sugar, and Lombardy poplars. Among a score of "nom-de-plumes," that of "Northern Centinel" was used the longest and is best known. "Anticipator" was another.

During the years 1794 and '95, the Watsons lived at Colonie, the northern suburb of Albany. Fleeing from the Terror at home, came Count and Countess de la Tour de Pin, the later the daughter of the noted Count Dillon. With his customary solicitude for those in affliction, and out of lingering affection for France, Watson helped them to establish a home in the neighborhood, which speedily became a haven for French refugees. Thither flocked the more noted French exiles, Talleyrand, Volney, the philosopher, the learned Pharaux and the distinguished ex-chamberlain of Louis XVI, Des Jardin. Pleasant, indeed, to test one's rusty French and one's vivid ideas in such brilliant company, but there came a day—the relations of France and America being strained to the point of war—when the excited

Frenchmen descended upon Watson's office to predict that the frontiers of America would soon be lined by French bayonets. Elkanah drove them out with a blast of patriotism: "God grant, if so, that the invaders may be repelled at the threshold, or exterminated to a man." The French colony left him alone after that.

Watson says he worked with unusual zeal, establishing the Bank of Albany, but it was foreordained that he would soon be out of favor with his Dutch directors. In politics he led the Yankee interest in the town, and he was all for innovations which distressed the conservative and thrifty Dutch, for free schools and turnpike roads and local improvements. He fought for two main highway projects—one to the head of Mohawk navigation at Schenectady, the other paralleling the Hudson to New York City. In his mind the idea formed of establishing a second bank, the New York State, in which Yankee interest would predominate. When he felt strong enough to move, he gathered his Yankee friends around him and applied for a charter. They were a strong group—John Tayler, Elisha Jenkins and other Yankees, with the Dutch interest represented by one or two wide-awake men, one of them General Peter Gansevoort, the hero of Fort Stanwix. The General Incorporation Act had not been passed, each charter required a special act of the Legislature, and there were all manner of legal and political difficulties to be overcome. Watson had to go to New York to see the great Chan-

cellor Livingston, who was opposed to the charter, but Watson won Livingston over, and the charter was granted, though for a short term. When the term expired, Elkanah knew how to get it renewed, visiting Capitol Hill with a pocket full of stock certificates and distributing them judiciously. He belonged, it seems, to the "Quid" party—quid pro quo!

The State Bank prospered so well that in four years Watson felt able to retire from active business. He was just short of fifty, but he had made a stake and his mind was too vivacious and notional to enjoy the restraints of routine business. He wanted to show Americans how to farm! He perceived that the usual farming operations were hardly more than land mining, exhausting quickly the stored riches of new soil. In Europe he had seen a more scientific agriculture, winning rewards from soil which had been tilled for centuries. So he purchased "an elegant mansion, connected with an extensive farm, near the beautiful village of Pittsfield, Massachusetts." He had his disappointments there, too, which are faintly indicated by his son: "His only error, in the adoption of this pursuit, was that he embraced it at too late a period in life—after his habits and feelings had been molded by long residence in cities." However, he had a good deal of fun during his eleven years on the farm, and he accomplished certain things for American agriculture which could hardly have been achieved so early

except by a man of terrific energies with abundant means and leisure.

His first step was to import Merino sheep. Noting the inferiority of coarse, loose-wooled varieties raised in Massachusetts, he decided that American woolen mills could never thrive on such poor raw material. So he purchased a pair of Merinos from the Livingstons, who had recently brought the breed from Spain, tethered the pair under the Elm Tree on the public square of Pittsfield and "notified an exhibition." Many farmers attended, Watson made a speech, and the farmers applauded. That was the germ of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, which held the first county fair in America. Years later Watson wrote: "From that moment to the present hour, Agricultural Fairs and Cattle Shows, with all their connections, have predominated in my mind, greatly to the prejudice of my private affairs."

The Watson habit, even at fifty, was to go sled-length into any program, whether it were canals or Merinos. He wrote to statesmen, newspapers and farmers about Merinos all that winter. The next year, feeling that Merinos could not peg along by themselves, he brought in a pair of small-boned, short-legged, grass-fed pigs, and boomed them. Likewise a prize bull of an English breed. By 1810 he had won over so many farmers that twenty-eight of them appealed to the public for a "Cattle Show," which was duly staged that autumn. That winter the Legislature incorporated the Society,

and the following September Watson managed a celebration on such a grand scale that it caught the attention of the country. Sixty-nine fat oxen drew a plow held by the oldest man in the county. Each member of the society wore a sprig of wheat in his hat, two heads for mere members, three for officers. There were floats of manufactures, a broadcloth loom and spinning jenny manned by English operators, mechanics bearing flags, and a band of music—American union of industry and agriculture, all for progress, with a bang!

Elkanah saw to it that the annual fairs developed artistic, even spiritual, features. A patron of art at twenty-four, he was never the man to celebrate earth only. So he arranged for odes to be sung by full choirs, coached diffident clergymen in their Harvest Home prayers, and scurried around for handsome premiums. He brought the women into the arena by opening an exhibit of domestic manufactures, rewarding the fruit of the loom as well as the fruits of the field. The Berkshire ladies hung back at first, but he lured them in, and then browbeat them with a "formal address." As news of his innovations spread, he journeyed far and wide delivering addresses to farmers. One of his best publicity stunts was to induce a President to wear a suit of woollen cloth which he caused to be manufactured from the wool of his Berkshire Merinos. All in all, Elkanah Watson made the county fair an American institution.

During his years in Pittsfield he kept up a busy correspondence with men of affairs—with old John Adams, with the unfortunate General Hull at Detroit, with Robert Fulton. On August 14, 1813, Fulton wrote him of the failure of his submarine effort against the *Plantage* in Lynnhaven Bay.

The engine was within ten feet of blowing her to atoms, and proving to the world a new art of war. . . . His failure was only a small error in practice, no fault of principle. . . . I have now expended near \$4,000, and find that prudence will not allow me to go on. . . . You say you can raise funds. If you can, it will be a most praiseworthy and patriotic act. . . .

Ezra Ames' own portrait of Watson must belong to this agricultural era, as the engraver, V. Balch, has worked in enough plows, wheat, sickles and beehives to satisfy his subject, who doted on symbolism in art. The Watson of Ames is the Watson of Copley grown older, more thoughtful, more humorous, more full of jowl, more battered by Time, more bruised by Fate. The nose dominates the Copley; while the brow, extraordinarily high, dominates the Ames portrait.

By 1816 Mr. Watson discovered that farming with a check-book and a sheaf of hobbies is expensive. Ever free-handed in promoting the uplift, he reached the point, at sixty, where he knew he must take in sail with one hand and money with the other. Before he left, to return to business in Albany, his Society went on record,

very handsomely and at length, in praise of his services and in regret at his departure, setting forth his contribution alike to the farms and the textile industry of America. At the fair the next fall Watson returned to deliver his swan-song address. Already he was branching out. Societies had been formed elsewhere on the Berkshire model; Governor Clinton of New York recommended to the Legislature the establishment of a state agricultural board with county societies. Elkanah spoke at four New York fairs. Circulars went from his office to American consuls all over the world urging them to aid in the introduction of new seeds, animals and implements. In 1816 he prepared a memorial to Congress urging national attention to agriculture and pressed that plan upon Jefferson and Madison. Madison thanked him for "the Neapolitan Cabbage Seed, kindly spared from your small stock," but did nothing for the proposed National Board of Agriculture. Watson had hold of an idea destined to come to flower in the Department of Agriculture, but once more he was years ahead of his stodgy times.

Scarcely had Elkanah shaken the farm soil from his shoes when he set forth on his travels again. Nearly thirty years before he had made a bold start for Detroit but was turned back by the weather; now he accomplished the journey. On the canals he had fathered he moved easily as far as Syracuse, then took horse and floundered along to Buffalo on wretched

roads. On June 22, he visited Niagara Falls, around which he was ready to throw a canal ten years before. He thought the Falls disappointing, oversold by poet and painter, which may be taken as a sign that Watson was growing old. At Buffalo he had the satisfaction of being consulted by a committee of citizens on harbor improvements.

Thence he sailed on the *Franklin* for Detroit, stopping at Erie, where he rejoiced at finding a good tavern, and at Cleveland, full of enterprising Yankees. As he approached Detroit, he penned these prophetic sentences in his *Journal*:

The mouths of all the rivers (on Lake Erie) are choked by . . . sand. These are all susceptible of removal. The events of the late war have brought Lake Erie into prominence before the public mind. The want of harbors upon one of the most boisterous lakes on the globe, was severely felt in our recent naval operations. This fact, and the rapid progress of population in Ohio and Michigan, must demonstrate to the nation the paramount public policy which demands the construction of artificial harbors. This necessity will be vastly enhanced when the completion of the New York canals shall have opened a new avenue for the outpouring of the illimitable resources of Erie and the vast world which envelopes the upper lakes. The importance of these improvements will be enforced with still greater emphasis, when steamboats shall the next year appear upon these waters. Within ten years I confidently predict that the obstructions referred to will be removed, and that appropriate light-houses will illuminate the lake.

Detroit delighted Watson, and he had great hopes of Michigan, as "requiring only the vigorous arm of industry to convert it into the granary of America." The wilderness then pressed close to Detroit, but Elkanah interviewed two young men who had just returned from up-country. Contrast this opinion with that of Edward Tiffin, Surveyor-General of the United States, who a few years before had reported that not one out of a thousand Michigan acres ever could be tilled. In this case the optimist was right; Mr. Tiffin's memory remains uncherished in the great State he caricatured so sadly.

As Watson sailed away, he wrote:

It is impossible for an old traveller to look upon the existing condition of Michigan, and not be impressed. . . . It is destined soon to emerge . . . into a great, rich state. . . . Blessed with a luxuriant soil, and occupying a central attitude upon the most extensive internal navigation in the world, what may not Michigan aspire to become? . . . The future of Michigan seems to be certain, defined, full of promise and expansion.

Never did prophet speak more abounding truth! In little more than a century Michigan became the seventh state in the Union in population, and its industrial expansion became the marvel of the world. As substantial evidence of his faith, he bought Detroit land now entirely built over and immensely valuable. But, alas, he sold this tract within a few years to invest the proceeds

in land on Lake Champlain in ways which brought him much grief and little money. He became interested in the Ausable region of Lake Champlain about 1823, founding Port Kent, which he named for his friend, the Chancellor, and building a road to Keeseville in forty-six days of driving toil which at age, sixty-five, proved a severe physical test. His lands included 5,500 acres in Watson's Parent, town of Peru, Clinton county, and nearly 3,000 acres on Trembleau mountain, which was always about to produce a fortune in iron for the Watsons, but never did. For some years Mr. and Mrs. Watson spent their winters in Albany or New York, leaving their sons in charge.

Elkanah had his bad moments when he seemed likely to repeat in his old age the melancholy experience of facing his creditors as he had done in London. "I remain in a hazardous situation," he wrote in 1824, and ten years later he is still looking for that blessed mountain to restore his fortunes. Still, with that vast optimism of his, he built a large stone house overlooking the lake, a dwelling which to this day resembles Elkanah himself in being broad, expansive, a little florid and with unusual windows opening on the world.

Like so many substantial Americans of his time, Elkanah was land poor in his later years, but hope still rode high in his heart and he kept agitating for improvements. In 1826 he visited Montreal, envisioned

the future development of that city, and believed Lake Champlain would become the channel of a mighty trade route between Canada and New York. A few years later he began to boost railroads, promoting the western end of a railroad between Boston and northern New York. The completion of this railroad, though on a route other than the one he favored, gave Boston the inside track on far northern New York trade for several generations. That was the last large-scale promoting Elkanah did. In a way it rounded out his life; his connection with rails makes Watson almost a modern. He had met James Watt in Birmingham in 1782, when the steam engine had just been applied to forge hammers, and when the fastest transport was that astride a horse. Yet Watson had lived to plan a steam railroad and see it started across the hills and valleys of New England.

In his old age, say seventy—Elkanah sat for another painting, to Spencer. We have seen the golden youth in gay feathers in the Copley, a steady, thoughtful man in the Ames, and there in the Wilson, is Elkanah in patriarchal pose, seated, with a churchwarden pipe in his mouth and an immense beaver hat on his head—an old Watson who cares no longer how he looks to others, but is still interested in how others look to him. In the Copley portrait it is the nose that dominates; in the Ames the brow; in the Wilson the eyes—deep-sunk, unfathomable eyes which have seen visions, lo! these

many years. The mouth provides a pensive underline. Always a beautiful, generous mouth, the corners have drooped a little with age; the bow is still there but no longer firm. A sensitive old man this, who has known several sorts of suffering in his day, yet humor lingers both in gaze and smile. Elkanah will find life bearable and improvable—to the end.

In the campaign of '39 Patriarch Watson, then almost eighty, entertained Seward and Clay in his home on the same evening, and a few days later, President Van Buren. Always an enthusiast for causes, yet never a partisan in the political whirl, these visits of the nation's leaders in the lengthening shadow of his life were joy to his soul. In his youth he had sought the great and learned; in his nonage, the great came to him in his little town beside the blue waters of Lake Champlain. Three years longer he lived, jotting notes in his diary less frequently, and painstakingly rounding them up each January 22, his birthday. In his last summary, that of 1842, he notes that for six years past the "noble State of Massachusetts" has employed the Reverend Henry Coleman to journey through the rural districts, spreading practical knowledge in husbandry. The Reverend has written him a letter testifying that Berkshire keeps his memory green, as it enjoys the fruits of Watson's labors. One more Watson dream come true! The old man can die in peace, since so many of his dreams have come true, and those who doubted him for a hare-

brained optimist and reckless promoter now bow to him as a fore-runner, anticipator, seer.

Watson had the defects of his qualities; he lacked continuity, failed to follow through, with the inevitable result that others reaped both plaudits and rewards where he sowed ideas. Also, his mind had too many tracks. But one need not be a great man, it seems, to lead a great life. Many a greater man has lived a lesser life, a narrower life, a less productive life and a less interesting life than Elkanah Watson lived between eighteen and eighty, between his journey from Providence to Georgia and his journey from Port Kent to whatever bourne he found. In his rapid movements, irrepressible energy, and zeal to benefit his fellow men by adding to their wealth and ease, he typifies the dominant American spirit of to-day. He would fit into modern society more neatly than he did into the poorer, and withal crustier, environment which he tried to stir with his visions.

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To check certain lapses in the printed record, access has been had to the original, and in large part unpublished, journals and papers of Elkanah Watson, through the courtesy of Mr. Mark S. Watson and Mrs. W. B. Watson. This vast mine of material no doubt will be more comprehensively studied and presented in the future.









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